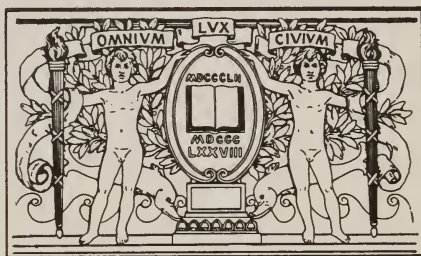




HOPE · LORING



LILIAN · BELL



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HOPE LORING

The Works of
LILIAN BELL



Carolina Lee
Hope Loring
At Home with the Jardines
Abroad with the Jimmies
The Interference of Patricia



L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
New England Building
Boston, Mass.



HOPE LORING

(See page 197)



LOPE LORING

By

LILIAN BELL

Author of "Abroad with the Jimmies,"
"The Expatriates," "The Love Affairs
of an Old Maid," etc.

Illustrated by

FRANK T. MERRILL



BOSTON
L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

* PZ3
B414 H

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Published September, 1902

Third Impression

COLONIAL PRESS
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

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TO
A. D. B.
THE ONE
WHO ALWAYS UNDERSTANDS

HOPE LORING

CHAPTER I.

FOR sixty years the firm of Loring and Company had been a name to conjure by in the New Orleans stock market. Before that the grandfather of the present John Loring laid the foundation of the family fortune by becoming the owner of vast cotton and tobacco holdings which were situated in so many different States that even the Civil War could not destroy the business of the sons who came after him. Thus Loring and Company had continued through every change, until the wealth of John Loring grew to enormous proportions. The business outgrew its environments. It outgrew its resources. Its influence spread through the entire South, and outgrew even that field. Then came the natural result to a man of John Loring's calibre. He decided to take his family and go to New York to live. The field there, he realised, might prove his Waterloo, but too many things drew him thither to be disregarded. His son Jermyn wished to enter Princeton, and was

already in his first year at Lawrenceville. His daughter Sallie had been educated in New Orleans at that excellent school of Mme. St. Cloud's, with a final year in Paris, chaperoned by her aunt, the Baronne d'Epinay, who was John Loring's favourite sister, and Sallie was born for a social career.

The youngest child, Hope, was a little girl of eleven, a sad tomboy, but so irresistibly pretty and with so distinct a charm that her wild ways were seldom curtailed.

Sallie resembled her mother both in face and temperament. Mrs. Loring had been a beauty and a belle, but from living many years with a man of John Loring's culture and character, she had developed into something more. She had come of a family of beautiful girls, whose unexpected little fits of flightiness, surprising digressions, and lack of continuity are best indicated by the French, who describe such character with the terse but satisfactory phrase, "*Il n'y a pas de fond.*" To the rational, Mrs. Loring was always something of a disappointment. But she was a woman of brilliant beginnings.

Sallie was a step in advance of her mother, for from her father she inherited a genuine love of art and for the beautiful in books. Artistic bindings and illuminated texts attracted her far more than the inner context, no matter who the author might

be. She seldom cared to go to the bottom of anything, was nothing of a student, but was quite an elegant dilettante. She drew, she painted, she played, she embroidered, she read poetry, she sang, but she seldom read. One could not detect the lack, however, for she possessed a tact which was never at fault, and he would be a shrewd diplomat who could find a flaw which Sallie Loring had decided not to exhibit. Both Sallie and her mother were devoted to society, and Mr. Loring well knew that they would ornament any circle in which they were placed.

Nor were Jermyn and Hope students. Alas and alack, John Loring himself was the only one in his family. He was a graduate of Princeton, as were his father and grandfather before him, it having been an ancestor of his who was responsible for that clause in Princeton's charter which, unless altered, would for ever prevent negroes from graduating from that famous university, and which has made it such a favourite for Southern gentlemen. He had been a brilliant student, and grew into a brilliant man, — a man of breadth and dignity and such a grace of character that no one who came into contact with him failed to carry away a distinct impression of a man so wise, so human, so graciously broad and cultured, that the mention of his name produced a glow in the mind like that of a precious memory.

Like Abou Ben Adhem, he loved his fellow men. Like the ideal student whom Cecil Rhodes described in his will, he was interested in the men and women about him. He listened well. He never talked about himself. He made men show their best to him and to others before him. By his own graciousness he induced the most frivolous of women to open the windows of their souls which were cobwebbed and dark from disuse. He might indeed be written down as the spirit of the thirteenth chapter of first *Córinthians*.

It was something of a problem how such a man would fit into Wall Street. In the South his business was conducted in a large and generous way, but the knowing ones declared that, owning the properties he did, no one except a fool could help making money, and with an ancestral estate which took care of itself, and nothing in particular to spend money on, it was no wonder he amassed wealth. But in New York? That cold-blooded, selfish city; a city of cutthroat business methods; a city with no Sabbath; no religion and scarcely a God — how would a man like John Loring fare? The knowing ones shook their heads and smiled.

But having determined to go, John Loring went. Mrs. Loring and Sallie were delighted, and a light of purpose gleamed in their eyes, as of a skilful archer who knows his arrows. Fortunately, they

knew what to do. More fortunately still, they knew what not to do. The Loring's were related to persons of influence and power abroad, and these weapons they used with unostentatious skill, but with a purpose fell, so that perhaps the social element did not realise how strong a footing had been obtained by persons obviously new, yet to whom no one cared to apply that damning term.

They entrusted Hope to Mme. St. Cloud, hoping for her wholesome influence on the wild spirits of the child, never dreaming that the spirit of Loring even in that small girl was strong enough to leave its imprint on both school and city, as the following strange events will show.

CHAPTER II.

BUILT of white stucco, picked out with black around the door and window frames, and standing deep in a wild garden of magnolia and oleander and peach-trees, Mme. St. Cloud's school for young ladies was one of the most delightful spots in New Orleans. Languid shade-trees of weeping willow waved gently in the street which the school faced. Walls of white stucco protected its aristocratic little inmates from the vulgar gaze, but a wrought iron gate, flanked by white columns crowned with capitals of iron flower-baskets, painted white and filled with the drooping, trailing, flowering shrubs of the South, permitted a glimpse of the great bell within which sounded the alarum for the visitor. A red brick walk led straight away from the gate to the deep porch, and the great panelled door, upon which an ancient knocker grinned a welcome which was never really carried out successfully, for visitors, unless authorised, were not in great demand at Mme. St. Cloud's. This apparent inhospitality can easily be understood when you come to think of the value of the little charges under her care, and

the danger of a possible match to the inflammable material of their sixty little eager Creole imaginations.

Before the war it had been famous as the town-house of old M. de Rambouillet, whose widow, the mother of Mme. St. Cloud, was still considered a fitting representative of the old régime. She was an old woman now, wrinkled and yellow, with flabby cheeks and a loose mouth, but her eyes were not to be ignored, nor her voice disobeyed. She always wore a cap of real lace and a trailing gown — of cloth during the day — of velvet at night, for she declared that no woman could look dignified in a gown which merely touched in the back. And as to any other objection which might have been urged against sweeping the floor with one's skirts, she insisted that the housekeeping which would not admit of trained gowns was a disgrace. And her servants thoroughly understood the degree of polish upon the slippery floors which this demanded, and the punishment its shirking entailed.

It was no wonder that people liked to have their children under the influence of two such women as Mme. de Rambouillet and Mme. St. Cloud, for they combined dignity of deportment with an excellent modern knowledge, and possessed the tact of combining the two without jeopardising either.

They received pupils even as young as five years

of age, if they were desirable additions to so select a school as Mme. St. Cloud's, and no matter what the training these little children received in after life, no matter how vulgar or modern or fashionable their surroundings, they never outgrew certain old-fashioned courtesies learned chiefly from observation of these two elegant women. For instance, they always had before them the example of seeing Mme. de Rambouillet and her daughter rise at the entrance of a guest, man or woman. They rose for everybody except servants, and for Mme. de Rambouillet, even at seventy, to remain seated when a gentleman was presented to her, she would have considered a discourtesy. There was a story told to the effect that the reason she refused to go into society during her later years was because, on her last appearance, a young married woman received her introduction to Mme. de Rambouillet without rising from her chair, and the affront, wholly unintentional and from ignorance alone, so insulted the haughty old patrician, that for ever afterward she indignantly refused any society except that which she could gather around her in her own house.

Mme. St. Cloud resembled her mother in all essentials of character, and to them she added a modern touch which was extremely fascinating. Mme. St. Cloud was also a widow. She was tall, with a beautiful figure and a complexion of peach

bloom. Her pale blue eyes were near-sighted and protruding, and the lobes of her ears were dragged down by long double cameo earrings surrounded by pearls. The brooch to this set she wore at the throat of her high black cloth gown, which was always cut princess in order to display the wonderful retention of her youthful figure, and like her mother's, always swept the floor with a truly majestic train.

These two women, picturesque, accomplished, and still regal in their poverty, had an uncommon influence over the susceptible imaginations of their little pupils. Their old-fashioned accomplishments of playing on the harp, of painting admirably in water-colours, and of embroidering marvellously were especially prized by the old families of New Orleans. It was considered an honour not purchasable with money to have one's children received there. A distinguishing feature of Mme. St. Cloud's school was that each child was at once set to work to embroider the lingerie for her own trousseau — not to be cut out and fitted until needed. In a Northern school this would have found no favour, from the fear of inciting unchildlike ideas. But in the South no age is too young for conversation about sweet-hearts, and women are trained from childhood for the one sweet aim in life of matrimony, and to be properly prepared therefor.

It was both pretty and touching to see the fingers of the little tots vainly struggle with buttonhole and embroidery stitch in order to begin on the fairy fabrics which would eventually form their wedding raiment.

To this school Mrs. Loring confided her little daughter Hope when the Lorings went to New York to live. The older daughter, Sallie, who had spent four years with Mme. St. Cloud, went with her parents, and was given a year at Miss Gordon's before being taken abroad.

But Hope was left behind, to her perfect content, with Mammy and Ephum to guard and wait on her. As a special favour, Mammy was permitted to serve Hope by day, provided she would go home at night to the cabin in which the Lorings had established the old couple. She arrived in time to dress Hope in the morning, and she saw the little girl safely in bed every evening before she consented to join her lord and master, who was hanging around the servants' quarters, waiting to escort the wife of his bosom home.

Hope was a handsome child. Her hair was dark with golden flashes in it, and of a texture of exceeding fineness. It grew in a waving outline on her temples and hung fluffily down her back to end in loose rolling curls. Her eyes were dark hazel, changeable in colour, but fearless and truthful in

expression. Her nose was short and spirited, with thin nostrils, and her skin so delicate that every emotion changed not only the expression of her face, but its colouring. Her little flat ears, which showed her good blood, were lovely in shape and were set close to her head, a trifle high and shaded by tendrils of her hair. Her mouth was her best feature. Sensitive, mobile, with its patrician upper lip and its deep scarlet colour, its expression changed flashingly in every smile. And as she was a merry, sweet-tempered child, in spite of her highly wrought organism, her mouth was generally curved in laughter. Her chief fault was a quick display of temper, but as this generally came from an offence against her proper pride of race and blood, Mme. St. Cloud dealt almost too leniently with her fault, but, fortunately for Hope, this leniency did not foster her shortcoming. Of arrogance she had none. Her pride was her inheritance from the land of her ancestors, the land of the South, understood and condoned there, and only misunderstood when she came North, where Southern pride in its purity is not even apprehended.

To this select school of Mme. St. Cloud's came one day as a thunderclap out of a clear sky a strange child, — not only a Northerner but a Jewess. She was a pretty child, with the delicate green skin that Henner loves to paint; big, soft, black eyes

and blue-black hair with a fine glossy crinkle which could not be wet, dragged, or pulled into smoothness.

Although Mme. St. Cloud introduced her, and bespoke friendliness toward the little stranger, the children avoided and ignored her cruelly, and the day scholars' excited reports to their parents brought many carriages to the iron gate that afternoon. Mme. St. Cloud received them all with dignity, announced that her decision to keep the child was unalterable, and gently intimated that if any mother wished to withdraw her child, the present was an excellent time in which to act. Each mother hastily disclaimed any such intention, and went away thoughtfully revolving in her mind Mme. St. Cloud's dignified statement:

"I have introduced Rebecca Leopold to my establishment deliberately for several reasons — one of which is a matter of discipline."

Hope Loring was the most deeply incensed of all. She revolved around the stranger like a spirited colt who discovers an intruder in his paddock. Her eyes blazed with indignation, but her lips were silent. She went to her room, and took it out sternly with Mammy; then sat down and wrote a furious letter of protest to her father, demanding to be removed immediately.

This expenditure of emotion relieved her somewhat, but such was the contradictoriness of her

nature, that when Olympe de la Croix came to her with a plot to put burrs in the crinkly hair of the little Jewess while she slept, Hope indignantly rejected the proposition, and flatly forbade its being carried out.

Hope was so distinctly the leader of the school that she never suspected the weak-willed little Olympe of disobedience, but Olympe was wax to a stronger will, and the trick found so much favour with one or two other children that it was perpetrated.

The next morning there was a scene. Mme. St. Cloud dismissed the day scholars, well knowing that the element of secrecy would spread the matter with twice the importance that any public reprimand would obtain. Then she summoned the resident pupils, and twenty badly frightened children assembled under the awful gaze of those cold blue protruding eyes, whose stare awed them past speech.

She disdained an explanation. She simply said: "Who did this?"

She held the furious little Jewess by the hand. Her fury was not at the trick, but at the publicity. As no one answered, Mme. St. Cloud continued:

"Rebecca refuses to betray the culprit. She was in the act of sacrificing her beautiful hair by cutting it off with the scissors rather than have even the servants know, when I discovered it."

Involuntarily Mme. St. Cloud glanced at Hope Loring. The child's face was flushed with passionate emotion which might easily be mistaken for guilt. She was full of admiration for Rebecca, and of fury and contempt for Olympe's cowardly silence. As Hope was generally at the bottom of all mischief, Mme. St. Cloud could not prevent her accusing eyes from speaking what she would not permit her tongue to utter. Instantly the child's deep eyes flashed back an insolent defiance so mingled with scorn that the woman was convinced. Mme. St. Cloud glanced at her mother, who sat by in silence. A communication invisible to the children passed between them. Then Mme. St. Cloud said:

"You are dismissed for the day. Spend it as you please. But remember this: Among you is a coward. If any one assisted or suggested this contemptible thing, or knowing of it, did not prevent it, she is as guilty as the girl whose fingers did the deed. By not courageously admitting your guilt to me, you have dishonoured yourself, your family, and my school. No one of good blood could be such a coward."

She rang the bell, and a file of thoroughly excited and humiliated children trembled past her. She avoided looking at them. Her protruding blue eyes were fixed on the wall over their short heads, and

their spirited little souls felt the mortification she intended to inflict.

That day such a chattering of French went on in the bedrooms that it sounded like an electric storm. Olympe de la Croix wept and pleaded in vain. The others finally forced her to go to Mme. St. Cloud and make a clean breast of it. Olympe was not vicious. She was only weak and cunning. But her mischief was generally of a malicious turn, and was frequently only saved from attaining to the size of genuine malice by lack of intellect. Her faults and her virtues were those of a small nature.

Olympe never told what took place in that interview. She came out silently chuckling. But when she told the anxious girls awaiting her that she had been forgiven, her face was so pale that they forebore to question her.

When she had left the room Mme. St. Cloud and her mother exchanged glances. Mme. de Rambouillet compressed her lips.

"She is as artful as her mother was before her. She did not actually tell one lie but she intimated a dozen. Hope Loring had no more to do with that than I had. Accept a word of advice from me, and watch that de la Croix."

Although Hope admired the courage of the little Jewess in her refusal to name her tormentors, still the pride of the child quivered under the ignominy

of receiving her as an equal. They passed each other in the corridors without speaking. But Hope wrote a full account of the affair to her brother Jermyn, who was at Lawrenceville preparing for Princeton.

Two mornings after this occurrence the class in arithmetic was reciting. Hope was generally excellent in mathematics, but to-day on the black bench beside her sat the Jewess. Rebecca made a brilliant recitation, and took her seat. Mme. St. Cloud called on Hope. The child made an effort to rise, but jerked her head back, and sat down again. Mme. St. Cloud passed the question on to Olympe de la Croix, who answered it triumphantly.

Hope's face, now flashing with colour, now paling with emotion, did not escape Mme. St. Cloud. As the class was dismissed, she motioned Hope to remain.

"Hope, why did you not know your lesson to-day?" she asked, kindly.

"I did know it," answered the child, raising her truthful eyes to her teacher.

"Well, why did you not recite when I called upon you?"

"I couldn't."

"Why?"

"I can't tell you."

"Well, why did you not rise to say so? Are you forgetting your manners?"

"No, Madame."

"Were you ill?"

"No, Madame."

There was a pause.

"Will you not explain the matter to me, Hope?"

"I cannot."

"Did it occur to you to rise?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Then what changed your mind?"

"I can't tell you, Madame."

"You were prevented," said Mme. St. Cloud.

Hope looked up at her without speaking.

Mme. St. Cloud ruminated for a moment; then, taking Hope's hand, she led her to the black bench, and bending over it, saw a perceptible lock of the glistening chestnut hair caught on the rough fibres of the wood. The hairs were so long they seemed jerked from the child's head. She looked at Hope, and the child smiled.

"Did it hurt much, Hope?"

Hope shook her head.

"Which one did it, Olympe or Rebecca?"

"I don't know, Madame."

"You may go, Hope. If your head aches this afternoon, be sure to have Mammy come and tell me."

The child curtsied, and obeyed. At the door she turned back:

“ I said it didn’t hurt. I meant that it didn’t hurt my *head*.”

Mme. St. Cloud smiled.

“ I understand,” she said.

As Hope closed the door, Mme. St. Cloud said to herself:

“ It was Rebecca, and Hope will fight her this afternoon.”

CHAPTER III.

MAMMY was waiting for Hope when she reached her room. It was "big recess," as the children called it.

"Honey, was you kep' in?"

"Not exactly. Mme. St. Cloud wanted to speak to me."

"Has she cotched you in any new devilment?"

"No, because I haven't done anything — lately. But I'm going to!"

"Wha— what you gwine do, missy?"

"I'm going to pay that Jew girl for most pulling my head off in arithmetic this morning!"

"Pullin' yo' haid off? What she do?"

"She tied my hair around the bench so that when I started to recite it jerked me back and I missed."

"Tied yo' har! Jerked yo' haid back! I'll bus' her old nigger haid clean open for her! Le's see if she pulled any har out. Oh, my Lawdy me! missy, yo' haid's mighty near bleedin'! Wait, chile, till I get some stuff to put awn de spot! Ef I don' tell Mme. St. Cloud 'bout dis! Dat Jew

is a mulattah anyhow, an' has no bisness wid white chillen!"

"No, she isn't a mulatto. Heaps of Jews have that crinkle in their hair. And if you dare to tell Mme. St. Cloud, I'll run away and leave you for ever."

"Lawd, chile, I was jes' foolin'! I ain't gwine speak tell yo' tells me tuh!"

"I'll get even with her! Don't you bother your head!"

"I hopes yo' will! I sho' does!"

Hope went to her writing-desk, and wrote this note.

"Please meet me down behind the summer-house between the crêpe myrtles and the fence at three o'clock.

HOPE LORING."

"Now, Mammy, take this, and knock on her door and give it to her, and don't let anybody see you."

"Read it to me, honey!"

Hope read it.

"Dat's fine! Dat'll fetch her! I hope you'll lay her out!"

As Mammy closed the door, she looked at the note, and turned it over in her hand dubiously.

"Ef I don' give it tuh her, she'll ax her, and den I'll git foun' out. Ef I tell Mme. St. Cloud, missy'll

half kill me. De bes' way wid dat chile is to give her her haid, and puhtend I'm aigin' her awn, en den sometimes she quits jes' out of contrariness."

She finally decided to deliver the note. When she came back, Hope was sitting in the broad window-seat, her hair falling over her face, so that only her short white skirts and black silk legs were visible.

"Wot yo' got, honey?"

"A letter from Papa, and one from Jermyn! Just listen to what Jermyn says about Rebecca. 'Don't make any mistake, little brother, about that Jew girl. She must be a brick. Most girls, in fact all the girls I know, except you, would have blabbed. She didn't, so she'll do to tie to. I am half-back on the scrub team here, and think I stand a fair chance of getting on the Lawrenceville team during the season. It is great fun. I will teach you the game the first time you come North. It's better than tearing your stockings climbing trees and fences, and will just suit a tomboy like you.' There, what do you think of that?"

"What's a scrub team?" asked Mammy, mumbling her loose mouth in rebellion. "I don' lake dat word."

"Why, it's the team the Lawrenceville team plays with just for practice."

"Den is what you call de Lawrenceville team bettah dan de scrub?"

“Why, of course! It’s a great honour to be on the Lawrenceville team. Jermyn and Cousin Laflin would about die with joy if they could get on that.”

“Well, why don’ dey *put* ’em awn? I won’ hab my young Massa Jermyn awn no scrub team! You jes write me a letter to yo’ Paw! I’ll hab him *make* ’em put Massa Jermyn awn! Don’ dem Nawthen boys know he’s a Loring?”

“Pooh, Mammy! Being a Loring or a Van Tassel doesn’t count in football. It’s being big and quick and strong. *They* don’t care who you are!”

“Dey would in de Souf! I don’ lake wot I hear ob de Norf, missy! I don’ t’ink hit’s any place for famblys lake us. Now read me wot yo’ Paw done writ!”

“Well, *he* says, ‘My darling Hope. Your violent letter of rebellion came safely yesterday, and I have given the subject due consideration before answering. I heartily agree with you in your dislike of Jews and Jewesses when one meets them socially. You would agree with me in my dislike of Jews if you met them in business. They certainly are objectionable to persons of refinement, as they possess, in common with all successful races, the trait of aggressiveness which cannot fail to grate on sensitive minds. They are pushing, loud-voiced, and inconsiderate of the rights of others, to the verge of rudeness. No sensitive race could intrude itself

into residence streets, hotels, clubs, and restaurants where they know they are not wanted, unless they were callous. Jews are callous, but they are also successful. By that I do not so much refer to the cheap grade of Jews who are successful only in money. But the Jew in history is magnificent. If we had to deal with the ancient Jews, I am convinced that these strictures might not obtain, unless being the chosen race laid the foundation of the arrogance which Gentiles find so objectionable. But your refined Jews have excellent minds, are devoted to their families, are fond of arts and sciences, have contributed much to their development, and furnish that inevitable and necessary strain in the blood of a country without which no modern nation has ever achieved success.

“ ‘Remember all this. Remember also that by placing you in Mme. St. Cloud’s school, I expressed the degree of confidence I felt in her wisdom and judgment. She is temporarily in your dear mother’s place. Now if she has introduced a Jewess into her school, which is the most select and desirable I know of, she has done it with a purpose. Study diligently to discover what that purpose is and try to profit by it. If Rebecca annoys you, learn self-control. If she pushes herself into your society, learn toleration. If she is rude to you, remember that you are well born, and she will soon see the

difference between your behaviour and hers, and you will be a benefit to her. I have perfect confidence in you, my little girl, and I hope you will profit by these hints and let me hear from time to time your further impressions on the subject. With devoted love, I am,

Your affectionate father,

“ ‘JOHN LORING.’ ”

At the close of the reading both Hope and Mammy involuntarily straightened themselves.

Hope folded the letter just as the bell rang. She slid down from the window-sill, and ran to the door.

“ *Good-bye*, my honey precious. Jes’ you recite dat joggerfy lesson to show ’em how to do it. *Good-bye*, my blessed lamb.

“ Lawd, lawd ! ” she added, as Hope disappeared, “ she can’t no mo’ fight dat Jew gal atter dat letter dan I could turn white. Well, her blessed lill skin will stay whole one mo’ day, en dat’s enough to be thankful foh.”

At half-past two, Hope, peering through the blinds, saw Mme. St. Cloud and Mme. de Rambouillet drive away behind the old fat white horses to pay visits. At three she darted like a meteor the length of the garden, and stopped behind the natural screen and rendezvous formed by the crêpe myrtle bushes which grew in profusion around the summer-house.

Soon flying footsteps were heard, and Rebecca and Hope stood facing each other.

Although a stout-hearted child, Rebecca was a little frightened as her dark eyes met the flash in Hope's.

"What do you want of me?" asked Rebecca. She wisely kept her distance from Hope's little fists.

Hope eyed her slowly from head to foot, and the Jewess felt her imperfections being slowly inventoried.

"I wanted to ask you why you tied my hair this morning," she said, finally.

Hope's contemptuous look had driven away Rebecca's fear, and brought back all her former grievance.

"I did it," she cried, stamping her foot and pressing her hands together, "I did it because I *hate* you! And I'm going to do it again! When you've forgotten!"

"I shall *never* forget it!" said Hope.

"Then I'll try something else," said Rebecca, misunderstanding her.

"I sent for you partly to ask you that. Then I meant to fight you. But I've changed my mind," said Hope, slowly.

"'Fraid cat!" sang the Jewess.

Hope caught her breath. Then she smiled.

"It isn't that I'm afraid. Ask Olympe. I've

fought her. Ask Clotilde. Ask *any* of the girls. But tell me first why you hate *me*?"

"Because you despise me! You make me feel that I'm — that I'm different. Your eyes — I hate you when you look at me. None of you want me here, but I don't *care* what the others think!"

"But do you care what *I* think?" asked Hope.

The little Jewess looked down, and dug the toe of her little boot into the soft loam. She knew that it was confessing to a weakness, but she felt Hope's attractiveness.

"Yes, I do," she said at last, bravely.

"Then I'll tell you what I think. I think we shall be friends. I will make the other girls like you. My brother wrote me to-day that you must be a girl to tie to because you didn't blab. And if you knew my brother you would know that whatever he says is sure to be right. He's at Lawrenceville."

"Oh, is he going to Princeton?"

"Yes," said Hope, colouring with surprise. "How did you know that?"

"Oh, I was born in New York. *I* have a brother, too. *He* owns a theatre in New York, my brother does. It has a roof-garden, and he makes loads of money."

"I don't think I care for that," said Hope.

"Oh, but it's beautiful — that roof-garden! You ought to see it. It's on top of a high building, and

all hung with flowers and electric lights, and there is dancing and singing by the most beautiful ladies, and the funniest men, all dressed in queer costumes. It's lovely."

"I can dance," said Hope, promptly. "I always dance at the Christmas entertainments, and when school closes."

"On the stage?" asked Rebecca.

"Certainly. We have it in a hall, and our mothers and fathers sit in the boxes, and they throw flowers at me. The last time I had over sixty bouquets."

"I'd like to see you," said Rebecca. "It must be like our roof-garden."

"I suppose it is. Well, I'll let you see me practice some day. I am inventing a new dance. I just let the professor play for me, and I dance as I feel like it. He wrings his hand, and hops around on one foot, he is so pleased, and then he always says what a pity it is that my father is rich."

"Is your father rich?" asked the Jewess, with a gleam in her eye.

"I don't know. He may be, but I never heard him say anything about it, or my mother either, so it doesn't make any difference."

"Money *always* makes a difference," said Rebecca. "It is horrid to be poor."

"Were you ever poor?" asked Hope, anxiously. Rebecca coloured, and turned away her head.

"No, but I know some poor people," she said, uneasily. "Tell me," she added, quickly, as if anxious to change the subject, "did you change your mind about me because your brother wrote that?"

"Not — not altogether. My father wrote, too."

"About *me*?" asked Rebecca, opening her eyes. "Yes."

"What did he say? How did he know about me? Did you write to him? I wish I'd seen your letter!"

Rebecca put these questions hurriedly, and at the last she closed her lips ominously, and narrowed her eyes at Hope.

"I'm glad you didn't," said Hope. "It might have hurt your feelings. I didn't know you then."

"Did you ask to have me sent away?"

"No."

"Then you asked to be taken away yourself! You might as well admit it, because *anybody* would know from your face!"

Hope only looked at Rebecca without answering. Rebecca glared at her a moment; then:

"I'm glad I pulled your hair!" she said, suddenly.

Hope caught her breath.

"You wanted to be taken away just because I'm a Jew!" she burst out, passionately. "I hate you, Hope Loring! I hate you!"

"My father says the Jews are a magnificent race,"

said Hope, quickly. "He says their history is remarkable, and that they have the qualities of a successful people."

Rebecca's pale olive skin glowed. Her hands unclenched, and she stood looking at Hope.

"Ah, ha! So *that's* why you are going to be friends with me! Because we are a successful people! I thought it was funny that you — oh, Hope, come back here! I didn't mean that! Hope!"

But Hope flew on, and did not stop until she reached a tall persimmon-tree which overhung the roof of the side porch. Up the trunk of this tree she climbed like a monkey, swung herself to the roof, and climbed into her own room by the window.

Mammy was sitting there sewing. She looked up.

"Dar you is, honey! Come tell Mammy wot you said to de lill green-faced gal."

Suddenly the barking of a small dog filled the room. Mammy sprang up and upset her spool-basket.

"Whah dat fice?" she demanded, looking under the bed. Hope sat in the window-sill with her head behind the muslin curtain. Mammy searched the room. The barking continued.

"I sho' shut dat dawg in de wood-house not a ha'f-hour ago," she said. "Missy, help Mammy git de dawg outen hyah."

For reply Hope sprang down and barked in Mammy's face. The old woman straightened up.

"Lawd, chile! Yo' devilment gwine be de death ob me! Whah's you learn to bark lake dat? Now, don' you go and do dat in school, or you'll git kep' in."

"Mammy," said Hope, "don't tell any one that I can bark."

"All right, pretty. I won' say a word to nobody."

"Mammy, Doctor Larousse is coming this evening to vaccinate the whole school."

"Well, I reckon dat'll be a good t'ing. Smallpox ain't no joke."

"Mammy, *I* am not going to be vaccinated!"

"Yas, you is! Now, don' git such a contrary notion in yo' haid, 'cause you sho' is gwine be vaccinated!"

"Not with all the others!"

"Well, how you gwine manage? You can't tell him to come special jes foh a lill gal lake you. He'll mek you min'. He ain't lake yo' po' ole Mammy!"

"Well, I'm going to play a trick on him, and I'm not going to tell you, because you'd only spoil it. I only tell you so you'll not be frightened. No matter what you see me do, remember it's a trick and don't open your head."

"Hadn't you bettah write yo' Paw a letter? She

might forgit it ef she got to writin’,” muttered the old woman, as she closed the door.

That evening at supper the children were quite gloomy. They hated being vaccinated, but a small-pox scare had started up, and Mme. St. Cloud had decided to take the precaution. The older girls were pale and anxious. They dreaded the ordeal.

When supper was over Hope scampered to her room, and Mme. St. Cloud and Mme. de Rambouillet looked at each other and smiled.

“Either Hope is not well, or she is going to make trouble,” said Mme. St. Cloud.

Mme. de Rambouillet walked slowly up-stairs, and knocked at Hope’s door. Mammy opened it. She held a bottle of eau de cologne in her hand. Hope was lying on the bed.

“Is Hope ill?” asked Mme. de Rambouillet, quickly. “Lie still, my child! Do not attempt to rise for me, if you are not well.”

“Her haid aches, she says,” said the old woman. “You know dat lill Jew gal —”

“Hush, Mammy!” commanded Hope, with a frown.

“I have heard,” said Mme. de Rambouillet. “It was a shame!”

“It didn’t hurt much,” said Hope, smiling.

Mme. de Rambouillet laid her hand caressingly on Hope’s head.

"Give me the cologne, Mammy. I will bathe Miss Hope's temples."

"No, Madame, please!" cried Hope, struggling to a sitting posture. "I am not ill enough for that!"

Mme. de Rambouillet acquiesced with a smile. The child's charming flattery, so delicately administered, gave her a satisfaction as distinct as it was unusual. Although her lost wealth never occupied a correspondingly important position in her mind to her dignity and exclusiveness, yet with the loss of the former, the latter became more precious, as without wealth it required no small skill to exhale her two remaining attributes with subtlety. Thus Hope's unconscious tribute to the rare preciousness of a service at the old patrician's hands touched her in her most vulnerable spot.

When she had dropped a kiss on Hope's forehead and taken her leave, Mammy said:

"Why wouldn't you let Madame bathe yo' po' lill haid, missy?"

"Because it doesn't ache! I don't want to fool her. I'm doing this for Doctor Larousse. Hush, I hear him coming! Now, remember what I told you. Hurry up and go."

As the old woman obediently closed the door after her, Hope skipped to the closet and pulled out a cup full of white lather. This she deftly applied to the corners of her mouth, hid the cup, thrust the candle

back into its sconce, and lay down on the rug in front of the door.

Presently a sharp rap came, followed by the doctor's immediate entrance. Of course he stepped on Hope, and in an instant piercing shrieks rang through the house, which brought every one to the scene.

Hope clutched at the doctor's legs, and pinched and bit at him, while the frightened blacks screamed out incoherent exclamations; Mammy, entirely forgetting Hope's instructions, howling more loudly than all the rest.

The doctor, a young man, with a silky, pointed black beard and confident manner, was thoroughly unnerved by the suddenness, violence, and agility of Hope's attack. She clung and scratched and bit with hideous realism. Every effort he made to dislodge her resulted in being almost tripped up by her agile little arms and legs.

She finally hurt him so that his fright gave way to anger, and he exclaimed:

"This is nothing but a trick! Take her away from me, or I shall hurt her!"

At that instant Mme. St. Cloud appeared, having gone immediately for a large lamp. The room hitherto had been lighted only by candles, the dimness materially aiding Hope's naughty scheme.

Fearing detection in the strong light, and determined to fail brilliantly, Hope suddenly became rigid.

When they finally by force loosened her grasp and laid her on the bed, her violent exertions, the dust on the rug, the foam on her lips, her flushed face and disordered hair made so appalling a picture that even the doctor believed.

They worked over her for an hour before the child could allow herself to become composed. She had worked herself into an excitement over which she had no control.

She heard whispers between the doctor and Mme. St. Cloud. The word "telegram" caught her ear. The thought of her father being alarmed opened her eyes to the extent of the harm she might do. She decided that things had gone far enough.

She sat up suddenly. The doctor and Mme. St. Cloud looked at her anxiously. The doctor paused in dropping some medicine, and Mme. St. Cloud hurried to the bedside, but stopped suddenly at a burst of rational laughter from Hope.

"Well, did I do it well? Were you fooled, Doctor?"

The young man's face paled. He came toward her with a menacing look.

"Were you deceiving us? Was that a trick? Look at my hands where you scratched me with your claws! Mme. St. Cloud, permit me to say

that it is your duty to dismiss that child from so excellent a school as this."

"Perhaps," said Hope, distinctly, "when Mme. St. Cloud hears that I played this trick on you because you kissed me the last time you were called in, she may think you are the one to be dismissed!"

Mme. St. Cloud started. The doctor took a step backward.

"You are only a child —" he stammered. Then he rallied. "I kissed you as any man would kiss a pretty baby!" he said, defiantly. But he glanced apprehensively at Mme. St. Cloud.

"Hope will soon be thirteen years old, Doctor Larousse," she said, quietly. "I was married at fifteen."

"Madame, I beg your pardon. I had no idea the child objected."

"That is a lie," observed Hope, calmly.

"Hope!" said Mme. St. Cloud.

"Why does he tell it if one is not permitted to mention it?" cried the child, indignantly.

"Well, what is the truth of the matter?" asked Mme. St. Cloud.

The young doctor's face flushed, as he heard her ask a little girl to correct one of his statements.

"He seized me in his arms and kissed me a dozen times, although I screamed and kicked. When he

put me down I told him that I hated him, and would get even with him, and I have!"

"I have called you my little sweetheart for years, Hope," said the young man, pleadingly.

"I know you have, and as long as you never touched me, I permitted it. I do not allow any man to kiss me except my father, nor any boy except my brother and my cousin Laflin. And you knew it!"

"But you looked so bewitching, Hope —"

Mme. St. Cloud raised her hand.

"I have heard enough, Doctor," she said. "I must decide against you, and in favour of Hope. You must be the one to go. For your own sake, because I knew and respected your dear father, I will permit you to write me a note saying that your other duties will prevent your caring for my family and pupils longer. Hope and I will be discreet about this most unfortunate occurrence, for the sake of your reputation. For your father's sake only, I will give you an opportunity to prove that this was an accident. If I hear of a similar case, however, I shall then make public why I dismissed you. Young man, a physician is not a man with his patients. Remember that!"

The young man's face turned livid. To lose the patronage of Mme. St. Cloud's school was to lose the most lucrative portion of his practice. But one

glance into her stern countenance told him that her mildness was only outward, and he dared not provoke her by endeavouring to extenuate his fault. He accepted her decree with what dignity he could muster, and hurriedly left the house.

Mme. St. Cloud was thoroughly nonplussed by Hope Loring. She loved the child dearly, but her mischief kept the house in a continual turmoil. For the sake of example, she felt that Hope ought always to be punished, but when Hope confessed her motives, as she generally could be induced to do, it always happened that her cause was so just that one's sympathies invariably went out to her, and in Mme. de Rambouillet, who had been, strange to say, a sad tomboy in her day, Hope found an advocate who was always certain to beg forgiveness for the culprit.

"Hope," said Mme. St. Cloud, "you frightened me sadly."

"I am so sorry, dear Madame! I did not stop to think of that."

"You never stop to think, my child."

"That is true; I never do! I wish I could. But if I did, I would never do these things, and then —"

"Ah, that is the trouble! You *love* to be naughty!"

"They never seem as naughty when they pop into

my head as they do afterward," said Hope, bending her head.

"What are you going to do to Rebecca?" asked Mme. St. Cloud, abruptly.

"Nothing," said Hope.

"You mean that you have not yet decided, or that you do not wish me to know — until afterward?"

"There is not going to be any afterward," said Hope, raising her fearless eyes to her teacher's. "I am going to be friends with her and make all the other girls like her."

Mme. St. Cloud opened her eyes at the first statement, but smiled somewhat apprehensively at the last.

"You are not like other girls, Hope," said Mme. St. Cloud, smiling. "Only boys and tomboy girls like you would allow an incipient quarrel to become the basis of a friendship."

"I feel like a boy," said Hope, briefly.

"How do you intend to go about making the other girls like Rebecca?" asked Mme. St. Cloud.

"Just by being nice to her myself. That will show the others that I like her, and then they will," said Hope, quite unconscious that this speech would have sounded unbearably priggish in another.

"But *do* you like her, Hope?"

The child hesitated.

"You brought her here —" she began, diffidently.

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted Mme. St. Cloud, "but you may speak quite freely to me, nevertheless. Do you really like her? Is she a lady?"

"No, Mme. St. Cloud, she is not a lady, and I do not like her, but Jermyn said she was a brick not to bl— not to tell, and my father said that —"

"Well?"

"That I might learn tolerance from being obliged to associate with her."

Mme. St. Cloud's face paled under these strictures of the little aristocrat, who did not know how cruelly she was wounding. Mme. St. Cloud recovered herself with an effort.

"How do you mean that she is not a lady? She is pretty, and dainty-looking, and I know that she has good blood in her veins. *I know it!*" she cried, with sudden passion.

Hope looked so startled that she repeated her question in a gentler tone.

"I can't tell you exactly why she is not a lady. You feel it in some way. And then she does not understand why a lady does things."

"I understand," said Mme. St. Cloud, slowly. Then she added: "Would you mind telling me the conversation between you when you discovered that — she was not like the ones we know?"

The child obediently began at the beginning, and

rehearsed the scene of the rendezvous word for word. When she had finished, Mme. St. Cloud buried her face in her hands. Hope was so startled by this apparent breaking down in her usually austere teacher that she cried out:

“O Mme. St. Cloud! What have I said to hurt you!”

“No, Hope, do not let me alarm you. Dear Hope!” she cried, kneeling by the side of the bed and leaning close to the child, “may I tell you why I am so grateful to you for your decision in regard to Rebecca?”

Hope’s eyes widened and darkened. Mme. St. Cloud’s near-sighted blue eyes, usually so cold, were dim with tears; her pink cheeks were flushed, and her breath, sweet as roses, fanned Hope’s brow as she kissed her. The candles sputtered in their sconces, and Mme. St. Cloud’s long black train trailed away from the kneeling figure into the darkness beyond.

“Hope, listen to me! Rebecca is my sister’s child — my own niece. Did you ever hear that I had a sister? Well, she disgraced us by her mad, runaway marriage with a Jew, and we never mentioned her name afterward. She died eight years ago when this child was four years old. Rebecca is therefore a few months older than you. My mother and I fought against the claims my sister’s

orphaned child had upon us as long as we could. The father died two years later, and Rebecca fell into her stepbrother's hand, a warm-hearted, generous young man, but oh, Hope! What a companion for a Rambouillet! For Rebecca has Rambouillet blood in her veins, and she ought to be a lady like her poor mother. But you say she is not, and I myself was afraid of it. Do you, child that you are, understand our predicament? Here were we, in the very surroundings and position calculated to save my sister's child from hopeless commonness. But our duty to our other pupils! We felt that it might wreck the school, and if that went we must starve! We could no longer live! Now, child, tell me, will you take Rebecca under your protection as you intended, and see what can be made out of her? Or do I ask too much?"

For reply, Hope threw her arms around Mme. St. Cloud's neck, and kissed her again and again.

"I just *love* you," she cried, "and I'll do anything in the world for you! Don't you see I shall be obeying my father and pleasing Jermyn as much as I shall be helping you!"

Mme. St. Cloud caught the child's little soft, yielding body to her breast, and held her closely.

"You darling," she murmured, "your graceful way of removing the burden of obligation is worth a king's ransom. Oh, Hope, if only you were my

niece instead of Rebecca! My heart goes out to you, child!"

Hope's delicate face flushed at the compliment this unconscious admission implied, but her usual ready tongue found no suitable reply.

"Now let me send Mammy to you to get you ready for bed. Kiss me again, my little friend, and allow me to tell you once more of the good you have done me. You have taken a heavy load from my heart. Good night, dearest. You are as chivalrous as a man."

There was one more tender embrace, a sad smile on Mme. St. Cloud's red lips; then the door closed, the candles flared at the draught, and she was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

HOPE rather enjoyed the surprise of even the older girls like Buddie Gordon and Dixie Voorhies when she and Rebecca sedately paced up and down the red brick walk at "big recess," with their arms around each other's waists. At first Olympe de la Croix and Clotilde Tremaine were quite scornful of the intimacy, but Hope was so proudly indifferent to their attitude that they weakened after the first few days, so that when Hope invited Rebecca to climb her own persimmon-tree and share the hot wafers Mammy made for her little mistress, they succumbed entirely, and Rebecca became one of them.

The first time Rebecca was punished, Olympe de la Croix was very mysterious with Hope, but Hope saw her whispering and giggling with Buddie and Dixie, and she knew if the older girls were questioning her that something must have occurred. So Hope, who never beat about in the bush, went up to the little group, and said:

"Dixie, do you know where Rebecca is?"

"Olympe says she is being kept in," answered the young girl.

"What for?" demanded Hope.

"Tell her, Olympe," said Buddie Gordon.

"Why, I was out of money, and I said so before Rebecca, and she offered to lend me some. So I took it, but when I went to pay it back she wanted interest, and I told her nobody but a Jew would charge interest, and she slapped my face. So then I told Mme. St. Cloud."

"You told all that to Mme. St. Cloud!" cried Hope, her face paling. "Oh, how that will hurt her!" she added, involuntarily.

"Then why did she bring a Jew among us?" added Dixie. "She might have known such things would happen!"

Olympe looked slyly out of the corner of her eyes at Hope to see how she would take a criticism of Mme. St. Cloud from such a girl as Dixie Voorhies.

Hope saw the look, and it enraged her.

"Olympe, did Rebecca tell you that she would want interest when you borrowed the money?"

Dixie and Buddie whirled around on Olympe at this, and saw the truth in her guilty manner and darting glances.

"Oh, oh!" they cried. "It was a bargain, was it? You understood it before you took the money,

and then you told Mme. St. Cloud in order to get out of paying?"

Olympe started to run away, but Dixie caught her by the arm.

"No, you don't!" cried the young girl. "You will come right with me, and confess the whole thing to Mme. St. Cloud. *Then* we shall see what we shall see!"

"And all for a matter of sixty cents," said Mme. St. Cloud, scornfully, when the tale had been told. "Olympe, I shall write a note to your mother. You have broken the rule against borrowing money. Now I shall no longer trust you, nor help you to save your money. You must go down to the bank and draw out all the money I have persuaded you to save to surprise your mother with, and I shall withdraw your account. You may now spend your money or save it in any way you please, but you cannot have a bank-book any more because you are dishonourable. Alas, that you make me say such a thing of one of my children!"

"Hope doesn't save hers!" cried Olympe, furious at the disgrace she had brought upon herself. "You told us to save all we didn't spend. Hope doesn't. She *lends* it! After you told her not to, too! Ah, ha, Hope Loring!"

"Hope, do you lend your money?" asked Mme. St. Cloud, looking at her.

“No, Madame.”

“Oh, what a story! I saw her! And Clotilde showed it to me twice!”

Mme. St. Cloud only looked at Hope's crimson face. To the ordinary observer Hope would have appeared guilty. But Mme. St. Cloud knew better.

“Madame, you told us neither to borrow nor lend, but you did not tell me not to give money away, did you?”

“No, I did not. But I expected you to know that I did not want you to have money transactions with each other. You knew that.”

“Yes, Madame, I did know it. But sometimes the girls who have been most anxious to surprise their mothers with their savings have wanted to draw some of it out, and to prevent that I have just given them a little. That's all.”

Dixie Gordon, the only sixteen-year-old pupil of the school, who had been listening in silence to this conversation, turned suddenly to Olympe, and said:

“Did Hope ever give *you* any money, Olympe?”

“Yes, two or three times. She's got so much more than any of the rest of us that she can afford to. Just think! She's got over a thousand dollars in the bank now!”

“And yet you told on her!” cried Dixie, ignoring Olympe's excuse. “Mme. St. Cloud might just as

well expel you at once, Olympe, for none of us will ever speak to you again."

"Dixie, Dixie!" said Mme. St. Cloud. "Be careful what you say!"

"I repeat it only for myself, Madame. The others may do as they please. But for myself, I shall never speak to Olympe de la Croix again! Come, Hope!" And with a curtsey to Mme. St. Cloud, Dixie and Hope left the room followed by Olympe — alone.

Rebecca had remained a silent but eager spectator of this scene. Mme. St. Cloud regarded her anxiously. Conflicting emotions were evidently struggling in the little girl's mind, admiration for Hope, envy and greed for her money. Finally she said:

"I, too, would give money away, if I had plenty more and wouldn't miss it!"

Mme. St. Cloud groaned. Rebecca looked at her in surprise and curiosity. She was always a little afraid of Mme. St. Cloud. Her austerity and self-control froze Rebecca, but on this occasion she forgot her fear sufficiently to say:

"Is it true that Hope Loring has all that money in the bank?"

"Money in the bank!" cried Mme. St. Cloud, starting up and towering above the little Jewess, who fell back against the wall in sudden fear. "I would burn every bank-book in the school if it would

teach you to care less for money, or if it would make a lady of you!"

Rebecca's delicate green skin turned pale. Her eyes blazed and her throat worked convulsively.

"I can't help what I am!" she flashed out. "I can't help being a Jew. I can't help being hated!"

"I don't hate you, child! I don't indeed. Come here and sit on my knee. I was too harsh with you, Rebecca. But tell me one thing. Which girl out of all this school do you like the best?"

"Hope Loring," said Rebecca.

"Because she is a Gentile?"

Rebecca glanced up quizzically into Mme. St. Cloud's face. Then she shook her head.

"No, you love her as we all do — big girls like Dixie and Buddie, and little girls like you and Clotilde, and as Mme. de Rambouillet and I do — because she is high-minded and chivalrous and brave and kind to all who are in any sort of distress. You could make us love you just as much, if you would cultivate those qualities."

The little girl sat quite still on Mme. St. Cloud's knee for a moment. The muscles of her face twitched. She was trying not to cry. Then she said:

"What do I do that *you* don't like?"

Mme. St. Cloud started slightly. She had flattered herself that she had concealed her dislike of

the child. It had been impossible to love her, although she had tried.

“Shall I tell you? Well, you are a very conceited little girl. You are vain of your cleverness, and you have been spoiled by having your opinions listened to. Now the opinions of a little girl your age are all very well, but you must not thrust them upon older persons. You often interrupt the conversation to tell what *you* think. What do you suppose a woman of the cultivation and age of Mme. de Rambouillet cares for the opinion of a little girl of twelve? You must withhold your opinion until it is asked for, and then express it modestly and feel flattered that any one cares enough for it to ask to hear it. Then you boast about your charity. That is not in good taste. I think that you are a clever little girl and that your impulses are good, but you are what the English term ‘bad form,’ which means that you have ways which the best society does not recognise. You can conquer these things, however, by observing closely those whom you most admire, and modelling your conduct and your manner upon theirs.”

“Then I will copy *you!*” said Rebecca, looking up into Mme. St. Cloud’s face, with all her soul in her expressive eyes. “I never knew anybody like you before, except —”

"Except?" repeated Mme. St. Cloud, trembling violently.

"Except the little I can remember of my mother. It has been coming back to me since I came here. I think more about her. My mother must have been like you!"

Mme. St. Cloud hid her face in the child's hair.

"Oh, Rebecca," she whispered. "Think of your mother all you can, child, and try to be like her."

"Did you know her?" murmured Rebecca.

"Yes, I knew her when she was very young."

"Then she must have been nice, for you never know any but the very best."

"Sometime, when you have grown more like her, I will tell you all I know of her."

"But not now?" pleaded the child.

"No, not now. When you have learned to understand, I will tell you. Now go."

Rebecca felt a slight pressure of Mme. St. Cloud's arms around her as she slipped from her knee. She stood wistfully regarding her teacher for a moment; then she said:

"Will you kiss me, Mme. St. Cloud?"

Mme. St. Cloud looked surprised.

"Would you like to have me?" she asked.

The child nodded, and two tears rolled down her cheeks. Mme. St. Cloud took her in her arms.

“My little girl,” she said, tenderly, “most certainly I will kiss you, and every evening I will come to your room, and tuck you in bed, and kiss you good night.”

Rebecca’s little thin arms tightened stranglingly around Mme. St. Cloud’s throat. Then, without a word, she turned and ran from the room.

CHAPTER V.

MME. DE RAMBOUILLET'S seventieth birthday was approaching, and Mme. St. Cloud suggested that as a school they should recognise it. As this meant an entertainment, probably a play and a feast, to say nothing of the excitement of rehearsals and cessation of strict school routine, the idea was hailed with delight by both day and resident pupils, and instant preparations were begun.

Then Dixie Voorhies gathered all the available girls into her room one day, and suggested that they should buy Mme. de Rambouillet a present.

"Something handsome, I mean, girls. Something which represents the whole school, and which she can always keep as a souvenir."

"A fine set of books," suggested Buddie Gordon.

"No, something in silver. Then we could have it engraved."

"But she has all her old silver. She wouldn't care for any of it to be duplicated with modern things. She despises new silver."

"We might give her a loving-cup," suggested

Hope Loring. "Some people gave my father a most glorious one before he left New Orleans."

"Just the thing," cried Buddie. "Why didn't I think of that?"

"I wonder how much one would cost?" asked Rebecca.

The girls all looked at each other. No one had any idea.

"We'll have to go to the jeweller's and inquire," said Hope. "I'll go to-day."

"How much can we afford to spend?" asked Buddie.

"And where shall we get the money?" added Clotilde Tremaine.

"Shall we draw it out of the bank?"

"Then Mme. St. Cloud would discover it!"

"Oh, you want this to be a surprise?"

"Certainly. It would be so much more fun!"

Then ensued a silence, as they sought in their minds for ways and means.

"I suppose you know," said Rebecca, "that such a loving-cup as we want would cost about five hundred dollars!"

"Five hundred dollars!" screamed the girls in chorus.

"Won't it, Hope?"

"I'm afraid it will. You know we want it gold-

lined, with repoussé figures on it, and we will want a special design made — ”

“ Why couldn’t we have this house on one side? It’s colonial, you know, and one of the best examples of architecture in the country. My father says so ! ” cried Dixie.

“ We could ! ” cried Hope. “ What a lovely idea, Dixie ! ”

“ Then,” pursued Dixie, warming to her task, “ it would be sweet to have on the reverse side two medallion portraits of M. and Mme. de Rambouillet. We could take that ivory type portrait off the drawing-room wall, and nobody would miss it ! ”

The girls gave little squeals of delight and admiration. The ivory type was of M. and Mme. de Rambouillet in their wedding garments.

They could hardly wait until Hope, under Mammy’s faithful escort, came back to report. The girls met her at the gate, whispered to her on the porch, waylaid her in the halls, but she rushed through their midst, and flew to her own room, followed by a stream of all the other girls, some of the day pupils having waited for her return.

There was not room for half of them to sit down, although Mammy hospitably cleared and perched three little girls on the bureau, where she stood holding them on.

“ Quick, Hope ! How much will it cost ? ”

“Well, I found the very man who designed my father’s, and he drew a sketch for me — here it is — and it will be too beautiful for anything, but it will cost six hundred dollars!”

Exclamations of delight over the sketch were drowned in a chorus of groans over the price. The paper passed from hand to hand.

“It would be lovely and appropriate and everything nice,” said Dixie, “but we never in the world could get all that money.”

“Well, y’all ought to hab knowed bettah dan to start de ting to-day!” said Mammy, wagging her head. “It’s Friday, an’ boun’ to bring disapp’iment!”

The superstitious girls, brought up with negro nurses, looked at each other in dismay, and several reached in their pockets to touch a rabbit’s foot.

“Nonsense, Mammy!” cried Hope, laughing. “Surely you girls don’t believe such nonsense!”

They all felt desperately disappointed, but with each glance at the sketch, the desire grew stronger in every mind that in some way their design might be accomplished. Rebecca noticed that not even the most timid and conservative had made a movement to leave the room, or a suggestion to give up the idea.

“Girls,” she said, at last, “we all admit, don’t we, that we never could raise six hundred dollars

among us, even if we drew our money out of the bank?"

Everybody answered except Hope. She had just deposited her father's last cheque and left her bank-book to be balanced, with the delighted knowledge that she never before had had so much money in the bank at one time. She anticipated a beautiful surprise for her father.

"Furthermore, you all say that you couldn't even draw what money you have in the bank without having Mme. St. Cloud discover it, and ask what you were going to do with it, and spoil your pleasure by suspecting, even if she didn't accidentally find out what we are up to?"

As Rebecca paused for confirmation, all the girls nodded expectantly.

"Well, then, what would you say if I told you that I had a way to get all the money we want for that loving cup?"

"Oh, Rebecca! How? How?"

Without answering, Rebecca took from her pocket a dozen tickets, and tossed them in the air. Forty little hands reached up to catch them as they fell, and they were snatched up amid delighted shrieks of "Lottery tickets! Lottery tickets!"

Rebecca sprang on the bed beside Hope, smiling brilliantly.

“Where did you get them? How many have you got? Can you get some more?”

“All you want!” cried Rebecca. “You know the drawing takes place two weeks before Madame’s birthday, and if we all buy all we have money for, we’ll have all the money we want. Now keep still and let me explain my scheme for drawing our money out to buy with. You know we are allowed to draw money every two weeks. Well, suppose you each go down and draw what money you were going to, anyway. Understand? That night Mme. St. Cloud will look over the books and give them back to you as usual. The very next day go down again, and draw every cent out. You will then have two weeks lacking one day before she will look at your books again. That brings it to a few days before Madame’s birthday. Now the chances are that with all the excitement of the play and the feast, that she’ll forget about the bank-books. You know she does forget sometimes. And even if she does find out, it will be too late to stop us, and she will be so delighted at the idea of her father’s and mother’s portraits that she won’t say a word!”

The girls greeted this speech with shouts of delight. Mammy chuckled something about “dat lill green-faced gal, and her Jew raisin’,” but no one paid any attention. Every one was chattering at

once. It was a topic in the discussion of which they were thoroughly at home.

It did not seem to occur to them that they might lose their precious savings in the lottery. They only dwelt upon the prizes they were likely to win. There was not a dissenting voice. One and all, from Rebecca and Buddie and Dixie down to Mammy, at once resolved to put all the money they could gather from any source into lottery tickets.

"I'll tell you what else we can do," cried Clotilde Tremaine. "We can each ask our fathers and mothers for extra money to club and buy Mme. de Rambouillet's birthday present. They'll surely give us some, and then we can put that, too, in lottery tickets. What do you say to that idea?"

"Suppose they ask us what we intend to buy with the money?" suggested Buddie Gordon.

"Tell them it's in the hands of a committee composed of Hope and Rebecca — because they will have nobody to question them!" cried Dixie, laughing. "Besides," she added, in self-justification, "it's only fair to let those two manage it, because Hope suggested the loving-cup, and Rebecca thought out the way to get the money, and has got to get the tickets for us to buy. So all who are in favour of appointing that committee hold up their hands! Elected unanimously!"

"Now we are so certain sure of drawing more

prizes than one, suppose you order the cup, Hope," said Buddie. "They will need every moment of time there is in order to get it done."

"All right," said Hope. "I'll go down to-morrow."

With only trifling changes these plans were carried out. Hope ordered the loving-cup at a jeweller's to whom the name of Loring was sufficient for any purchase. Rebecca furnished the tickets as fast as the children drew their money from the savings bank and applied to her. Once the paying-teller, a little surprised to find every penny belonging to Mme. St. Cloud's pupils being withdrawn, asked one of them the reason, but was instantly silenced with the explanation that the school was to buy Mme. de Rambouillet a handsome present on her seventieth birthday.

Two days before the lottery drawing was to take place, Hope went out to spend the afternoon with a little friend. When she came back it was after supper, and the girls had gone to their rooms. Rebecca was waiting for her.

"What do you think, Hope?" she said. "One of the girls discovered to-day that the number of her ticket added up to thirteen, and she came to me and wanted her money back!"

"Did you give it to her?" asked Hope.

“Certainly not! I knew it was just her way of wanting to get out of a bargain. I told her so.”

“No, it wasn’t that,” said Hope. “They are awfully superstitious. You never saw anything like it. I only hope she won’t set the other girls to adding up *their* numbers, because they would all do the same thing. You can’t talk reason to them on such a subject as that.”

“Oh, nonsense,” said Rebecca. “They won’t do anything when they find they can’t.”

But the next day nearly every girl in the school got demerits for whispering. There was excited adding on slates, and counting up on fingers. At big recess the storm threatened. After school it broke. Those whose tickets did not add up to thirteen suddenly remembered that the scheme was hatched on Friday, in the dark of the moon, and a wave of superstitious terror broke over the school, as inexplicable as an epidemic of hysteria. They were sure they were going to lose every cent of their savings, and they came in a body and almost mobbed Rebecca to make her refund the money. As she had only acted as broker in the matter, of course she did not have it, and could not have refunded it if she had been willing. She fled to Hope in her desperate plight, and the angry and now thoroughly demoralised girls followed her. Hope listened in palpitating

silence to the incoherent explanations, demands, and threats. Finally she spoke:

“Girls, you know that Rebecca is telling the truth. She took your money, and paid for the tickets, so of course she can’t get it back for you. Your demand is outrageous. Now what are you going to do about it? Be reasonable!”

An angry murmur greeted her. They were not to be reasoned with. The murmuring grew more distinct. Finally it voiced itself in a threat to tell Mme. St. Cloud everything.

Hope’s eyes flashed, and Rebecca grew deadly white. If this thing could not be hushed up, instantly nipped in the bud, it meant disgrace for Rebecca, and mortification for Mme. St. Cloud.

Hope thought quickly. Her nostrils dilated, and her colour came and went rapidly.

“Give me your tickets, all of you! I’ll buy every one! To-day is Friday, and the thirteenth of the month, and I am thirteen years old, and yesterday I discovered that I have thirteen hundred dollars and thirteen cents in the bank! But *I’m* not afraid!”

At this defiant statement of so many dangerous facts, the girls began to cool. A few even withdrew their demands. But Hope was firm. She made Rebecca take a list of the tickets held by each girl, and the next day she withdrew her money, and

by night she held twenty-four receipts for the money, signed by twenty-four girls.

One day later the winning numbers were telegraphed and announced. Hope had won three prizes, amounting in all to fifteen thousand dollars.

At this astounding knowledge, naturally each girl felt defrauded of that whole sum, whether she had held a lucky number or not. They told their parents; their parents told Mme. St. Cloud; it got into the papers; everybody was going to leave school, and Mme. de Rambouillet and Mme. St. Cloud were in despair. Hope, as usual, was the scapegoat.

The child was simply astounded at the tumult around her. The publicity it attained, the enmity it created, so stunned her sensitive spirit that she took no satisfaction whatever in the amount of money she had won. All her life she had had everything her heart desired. Money was only an abstract commodity to her.

As the unfortunate loving-cup, which had so unwittingly been the cause of all the disturbance, now belonged to Hope, she took it humbly and privately to Mme. de Rambouillet the evening before her birthday, and presented it to her.

Mme. de Rambouillet took the beautiful cup in her hands, saying, tremulously:

“Why, what is this, my child?”

"That is the loving-cup, mother," said Mme. St. Cloud, "which was the innocent cause of all the trouble about the lottery."

"Why, how? Explain yourself. I don't understand. Is not this Hope's gift?"

"It is now, but originally the whole school planned and ordered it. Then when the girls got superstitious, as I told you, Hope, in order to save the horror of the school, bought in all the tickets, and unfortunately won so much money that it became the subject of envy, not only of the children themselves, but, to my surprise, of their parents, as well. Hence all this publicity. Do you understand now?"

"Alas, yes. So this exquisite thing was planned by the children themselves — the dear little things — and rescued, as usual, by my Hope! Child, come here and let me tell you that this is one of the most beautiful things I ever saw, and your chivalrous rescue of it was nothing short of heroic."

The old woman kissed the blushing child on the brow. Then as she began to examine the cup closely, and her eye fell upon the medallions of herself and her husband, done with exquisite skill, tears trickled down her wrinkled face, and she pressed the cup to her cheek, which reddened under her emotion, murmuring in French:

"My husband! Oh, my husband, and my lost youth!"

Hope turned to Mme. St. Cloud impulsively:

“You must tell her,” she said, “that I do not deserve any credit for buying the cup. Any of the girls would have done it in my place if they had had the money. And it was Dixie Voorhies who suggested the design which gives Madame so much pleasure. Dixie has such good taste. And it was Rebecca who suggested the way to get the money. So you see, they both deserve more credit than I.”

Hope noticed a significant look pass between Mme. St. Cloud and Mme. de Rambouillet during her speech, and her quick eye also detected that Mme. St. Cloud deftly concealed a number of letters which lay upon her desk with the addresses uppermost. She did not attach any significance to these things until, after a few words more, she turned to leave the room. The door did not latch properly, and as she reclosed it, she heard:

“I would rather sacrifice the whole school than a child like that!”

CHAPTER VI.

SUCH was the excitement caused by Hope's winnings that Mme. St. Cloud decided not to have the public celebration of her mother's birthday, and as this caused extreme disappointment among all those who had rehearsed for the play and anticipated the feast, this, too, was laid at Hope's door, and for a few days the unsuspecting little girl was more thoroughly hated than many a deliberate offender.

When this feeling was forced upon her notice, she wrote a long letter to her father, explaining everything. He answered it by a telegram:

"Have deposited in your name as your thirteenth birthday present fifty thousand additional. This with your grandmother's legacy makes two hundred thousand dollars to the account of Hope Loring. Will send private car for you Friday. Prepare to leave immediately. Have written Mme. St. Cloud.

"JOHN LORING."

As Hope finished reading the telegram, she unfolded a three-cornered note which had been placed

underneath her door. It was unsigned, and read: "Seven girls besides the writer have asked to be taken out of the school unless Mme. St. Cloud expels you for gambling. She has refused to expel you, but you will leave when you know you are not wanted here."

Hope gave such a cry of rage as she crumpled this note in her hand, that Mammy screamed out:

"What hit you, missy?"

"An anonymous note!" cried Hope, savagely.

"What sort ob a note am a monymous note, pretty?"

"One where the writer is too big a coward to sign her name!" cried the child.

"Who? Dish yere lill pink note? Don' you know who writ dat? Well, *I* does! I saw her little sneakin' pig-tail whip aroun' de corner ob de hall as I come up. Hit was Olympe de la Croix, das who hit was! Wot she say to you, missy? Tell ole Mammy!"

"She says the girls want Mme. St. Cloud to expel me for gambling — who ever heard the Louisiana lottery called such a name before? But she says as Mme. St. Cloud won't do it, she knows I will go when I know that I am not wanted!"

The old black woman's face worked with convulsive rage as she heard this.

"I don' believe one word ob it! Mme. St. Cloud

ain't been axed to 'spel you, honey. Dat lill Olympe de la Croix is meaner'n a dawg wot sucks aigs. Don' you b'lieve her!"

For a moment Hope appeared to gain a gleam of relief for her wounded pride. But the words she had heard Mme. St. Cloud utter flashed through her mind. "I would rather sacrifice my whole school than a child like that!" She had been asked, then, to expel her! Hope's sight blurred, and her throat fluttered. Then her father's telegram recurred to her mind. Oh, blessed deliverance!

"No," said Hope. "It may be true. But, listen, Mammy, to this telegram. We're going up North to live. You and Ephum must pack up, for the car will be here on Friday!"

"Is you gwine take me 'n' my ole man, lill mistis?"

"Certainly I am! How could I leave you here? You'd die without me!"

"I sho' would, but, missy, please'm', *don'* start awn Friday!"

"Now, Mammy —"

"Please'm', lill mistis! De ole ooman baigs you to humour her dis once!"

"It's silly, but I will do it, just because I always spoil you. We'll start Saturday."

"Lawd, chile, but you is sweet! Jes ez sweet ez

sugah-cane! Now run awn an' show dat telegram to Mme. St. Cloud, an' see wot she says 'bout it."

This suggestion fell in so well with Hope's inclination that she acted upon it at once. Mme. St. Cloud and Mme. de Rambouillet looked up from their embroidery in surprise at Hope's stormy entrance.

"Mme. St. Cloud," she cried, chokingly, "is it true that the girls have asked to have me expelled for gambling?"

"For gambling!" exclaimed Mme. St. Cloud. "Where did you hear that word?"

"This note was put under my door this afternoon."

Mme. St. Cloud took both the paper and the little hot hands of the child in her own. She looked into Hope's flushed face with a look which Hope understood.

"Let me read it, Eloise," said Mme. de Rambouillet. She adjusted her lorgnon, and read the note. Her face coloured with anger.

"Who dares use such a low word as gambling in connection with the Louisiana lottery?" she cried. "I have bought lottery tickets every year of my life, and my father and mother did it before me! No one would have dared to call it gambling in *their* presence! Eloise, you can remember, can you not, when the drawing was as grand as the first night

of the French Opera, and when we paid any price for boxes? It was so stupid and provincial to remove it from New Orleans and stigmatise it as wicked and pernicious. But that is what comes of what you call modern progress! Hope, child, have you any idea who wrote this vile screed?"

"No, Madame, but it makes no difference who wrote it, if it's true!"

"But it is *not* true!" cried Madame de Rambouillet. "We would not expel you for the world!"

"But am I not wanted here by the girls?" said Hope, piteously. "What have I *done*!"

"Ah, child, listen to an old woman. You have been successful where they have failed. You are young, Hope Loring, to learn the cruel lesson of envy, but it is best, after all, for you to know the truth. The truth and you have always been as sisters, so I will not mislead you even in the slightest way to make the blow less painful. No, Eloise, do not motion for me not to tell her, for you see by this cowardly note that our silence has done her not good, but harm. Hope, you have won fifteen thousand dollars, and your friends and your friends' mothers want to be rid of you! Ah, that makes you laugh, does it? What spirit! Another girl would have wept."

"Then they did want you to expel me, and you wouldn't do it, Mme. St. Cloud!"

“Many have threatened to leave unless you were expelled, and she intimated that they were at perfect liberty to go!” said Mme. de Rambouillet, grimly, “but Hope Loring is to remain with us!”

“But suppose they should leave!” cried Hope. “What would you do?”

“Starve before we would be drawn into betraying a friend!” said Mme. de Rambouillet.

“Do you believe they really would leave if you insisted upon keeping me?” asked Hope, incredulously.

“Three of them have left to-day, dear Hope, but you are to remain!” said Mme. St. Cloud.

“I came more to show you my father’s telegram than to show you the anonymous note,” said Hope, “but when I saw you I was so full of the other, I couldn’t help speaking of it first.”

Mme. St. Cloud took the telegram, read it, and handed it to her mother.

“When did this come, Hope?” asked Mme. de Rambouillet. “When did you receive it?”

“Before I read the anonymous note — fortunately,” said Hope. “It saved my pride a little.”

“You must not leave us, child,” said Mme. St. Cloud, huskily. “I cannot bear to part with you.”

“Dear Madame, it is better for me to go. I dearly love you and Mme. de Rambouillet, but now that I know that my friends, these girls whom I have

loved so, want me to go, I couldn't stay one day longer. I should hate the very air they breathed!" cried Hope, passionately.

Both ladies remained silent, regarding the child with interest.

"No, I will go, and when I am gone, those girls who have left on my account will come back."

A strange, new bitterness was in the child's tone which never had appeared before. They kissed her good night, and saw her leave the room with strange thoughts in their minds.

"I shall always hate girls after this. Boys never could be so mean," said the child to herself, as she ran down the long hall to her room. "I have finished with *girls!*"

But she was yet to sound one more depth in human nature whose existence she was still ignorant of.

The next morning gossip ran around the school like wild-fire.

"Hope Loring is going to leave!"

"She is going to New York!"

"She is going to Europe!"

"Her father is sending his private car for her!"

"She is going to take Mammy and Ephum!"

"That means that she will never come back!"

"Why should she come back? We don't want her!"

"Mme. St. Cloud says that her father telegraphed

that he had given her fifty thousand dollars for a birthday present!"

"Besides her fifteen thousand?"

"Her grandmother left her all her money, too!"

"Why, she's an heiress!"

"I wonder how she came to leave! *I* didn't say anything. My mother wrote to Mme. St. Cloud."

"*I* didn't say anything. I wouldn't do such a thing! I wonder who did?"

Olympe de la Croix smiled innocently, and said nothing.

The girls, one by one, began to speak to Hope as they met her in the halls and at table. Hope answered them pleasantly. Then one or two came into her room. Hope received them hospitably, and placed a box of candy in their midst.

"I don't believe she knows a thing!" they whispered among themselves.

The day before she left they came to school with little gifts in their hands — parting presents for Hope. She took them graciously. They cried at parting, and told her how they loved and would miss her. Olympe asked Hope to write every week.

They begged so, that Mme. St. Cloud took them all down to the station to see Hope off. As they entered the car Mme. de Rambouillet watched Hope with a gleam in those old eyes of hers from which

nothing escaped. Hope was a thoroughly courteous but slightly disdainful little hostess. She listened quietly to the exclamations of delight from the girls, who were examining her surroundings with eager curiosity which soon merged into respectful interest. They were glad they had been so forehanded as to give Hope keepsakes.

Their presents lay in a little heap on the table, with Mammy sitting near, watching them with a knowing expression of satisfaction on her old wrinkled face which was quite disproportionate to their insignificance.

Rebecca's was a box of pralines, for the child never could bring herself to open her purse very wide for any purpose. But as she stood silently aside watching Hope, a sudden realisation of all that Hope's friendship represented overcame her. Her eyes filled with tears, and her heart opened. She tore from her finger her most cherished possession — a little ring with a turquoise in the shape of a tiny heart. She pushed it on Hope's finger, saying, chokingly :

“There! Take it because I love you!”

Hope looked down at the ring, and instantly recognised all that the gift implied. Her face flushed with feeling, and she flung her arms around Rebecca.

"I will always be a friend to you, Rebecca!" she whispered, and the children kissed each other.

Then the smiling conductor came and warned the ladies that it was time to go. There were tumultuous good-byes, which Hope endured with patient courtesy, but her little arms clung around Mme. de Rambouillet and Mme. St. Cloud as they stooped to embrace her. They murmured tender endearments in French, to which Hope could only reply with her eyes.

The train pulled out, and Hope stood fluttering her handkerchief, with Mammy and Ephum behind her.

"The child sacrificed herself for Rebecca when Rebecca was threatened with danger — as usual! And this is the result," said Mme. de Rambouillet, as they drove home.

"Yet Rebecca is the only girl she cares about. She has promised to write to her," said Mme. St. Cloud.

"The Hope Loring we know has got a death-blow. She will never be the same again. Wait and see," murmured Mme. de Rambouillet.

As the train left New Orleans behind, and there was no one to see, Hope gathered all the parting presents together, except Rebecca's, and threw them out of the car window. As they hurtled through the air, the expression on Mammy's face became one of satisfaction — complete, rounded, all-embracing.

CHAPTER VII.

MME. ST. CLOUD was never the same after the fiasco of the lottery Rebecca had introduced into her school, which had resulted in Hope Loring's departure. Two years later Mme. de Rambouillet died, and in despair Mme. St. Cloud confessed her relationship to her niece, now her only surviving relative. The effect upon the child was electric. It gave her dignity in her own eyes to know that she was a Rambouillet, even if she also was a Leopold. She developed so rapidly, and along lines so satisfactory to her aunt, that Mme. St. Cloud allowed more and more authority to pass into her niece's hands, so that when Rebecca observed her aunt's failing health, and suggested closing of the school and a permanent residence in France near the ancestral home of the Rambouillets, Mme. St. Cloud gratefully submitted, and the famous school was closed.

With Hope, Rebecca had maintained an intimate correspondence, during the five years which had elapsed since Hope left New Orleans, so that, while widely separated, they kept in touch with each other. There was a certain untamed quality in the make-up

of each which the other found akin. A hatred of conventions, a longing for excitement, of danger even, drew these together. If they had been men they might have sown a large crop of wild oats, and been spoken of as the black sheep of the families. But being girls, their wildness was only mischief, and did nobody any harm. Both had qualities of courage and daring commonly attributed only to men. Both clung to each other as sole examples of what girls should be, and secretly despised their own sex.

Hope's companions in her new home were her brother Jermyn, during his vacations from Princeton, and her cousin Laflin Van Tassel, who, because his widowed mother lived in Westchester, spent most of his time with the Lorings, where Mrs. Van Tassel also was as much at home as a daughter.

Although these boys were several years older than Hope, they were of her kind, and the bridge between them was much less than between herself and Sallie. Hope knew as much about football as Sallie knew about chiffons, and all forms of athletics were to her as her native tongue. Nothing suited Hope better than to go down to Princeton to watch the teams practice. She knew every trick of every player; their strong points, their weak ones. Poor Mammy, who bitterly objected to Hope's tastes, faithfully followed wherever Hope's flying feet led,

watching her nursing with jealous solicitude. But Mammy knew better than any one except Mme. St. Cloud, what cruel experience with girls' fickleness had forever embittered the child's heart against her own kind, and had fastened her faith and trust where her untrammelled fancy led. When people openly wondered why Hope Loring was such a tomboy, Mammy would lift her head suddenly, and mumble her loose mouth as if minded to tell the whole story.

The young people whose friendship the boys made naturally fell to Hope's share likewise. There was Stony Stuart, a big, fine fellow whom everybody liked, and his brother Cuthbert, whom everybody wanted to kick. Their cousin Amy Whiting, who always stuttered when she got excited, was so much interested in a classmate of Jermyn's, Nuckols of Princeton, that she was delighted to be in Hope's society, for thereby she, too, under Mammy's protecting wing, often got down to where these idols reigned supreme. But neither she nor the two girls in whom Jermyn and Laffin frequently believed themselves to be madly in love — Genevieve Lawrence and Gladys Cox — loved athletics for themselves. These three girls took a means-to-an-end interest because Laffin and Jermyn were on the 'Varsity team, and Fanshaw Nuckols was so expert in boxing that he earned the heavy-weight championship and the sobriquet of "Brass" at one fell stroke.

But the boys never knew of this divided allegiance between the God of Sport and the Mammon of Society until the scales fell from their eyes on the day of the Great Game, when they found themselves deserted by all three girls, and then and there they put to test Hope's unswerving loyalty.

That with such wide diversity of taste the Loring's lived happily, is due to the fact that they were a sensible family, who loved each other with such tender devotion that they accepted each as each was, and wasted no time trying to make each other over to suit individual tastes.

Mrs. Loring had made good use of the five years since she left New Orleans. New York society had allowed itself to be invaded with less resistance than usual, not only because Mrs. Loring was a beautiful woman, whose husband was a gentleman, and whose wealth was considerable, but because the fashionable set is not averse to a wholesome, respectable family, now and then, who have brain, beauty, wealth, and no family skeleton.

The Loring's were a magnetic family. They possessed the Southern charm, and friends once made were kept. All were clever and discriminating without being witty. Sallie was attractive without being so much a beauty as to create envy. Mrs. Loring's beauty was so much a matter of course to her, having come of a family of beauties for gen-

erations, and having heard it discussed from her babyhood, in a land which makes the most of every girl's beauty, that she never gave it a thought, except now and then to experience pleasure when a pleasant thing was said about it, or a fleeting sense of gratitude that she was not plain. Jermyn and Laflin Van Tassel were in their third year at Princeton, and had won the goal of Hope's ambition, as well as their own, by being on the 'Varsity football team.

"A happy disposition," Mrs. Loring taught her children, "is much more valuable than good looks. Bring me, as your wife, Jermyn, a girl with a sense of humour, and a large toleration of other people's faults, and I shall not ask to have you marry a beauty."

To her daughters she said:

"I am better pleased that you are not malicious, and that you look for the laugh in everything, than that you are pretty. You never pick at each other, and I love you for it."

"Hope will be the beauty of the family," people said, but no one said it more generously than the Loring themselves. Sallie, who was only pretty, in the delicate, pale, slender style, watched Hope's budding into beauty with the delight of a lover.

They understood, too, the art of keeping out of each other's way. Hope, who loved to make a noise, was stowed away, when in town, on the top floor

of their Fifth Avenue house. There she had three rooms of her own, and shared the gymnasium with the boys. Thus she never disturbed Sallie, who loved quiet, although Sallie was sometimes dragged from a book to watch some particular gymnastic feat when Hope felt the need of approval and applause.

That Hope kept her girlishness through all this, and never permitted her love for boys' sports to develop into mannishness, may be set down to the girl's own judgment. Her beauty kept her feminine, for your beauties are never mannish. Instinct tells the plain woman to gain man's favour in any garb she can. Beauty realises instinctively that it must remain becoming to itself in clothes and manner.

Upon her arrival in New York Hope decided to spend as little of her time there as possible. After a few weeks, the charms of the great city palled upon her, and she easily prevailed upon her father to buy an estate upon the Hudson, where she might feel the country all about her. The restrictions of town irked her. She never cared to ride with a groom following. She cared nothing for the society which her mother and sister loved. But in the country her restless soul expanded and waxed exceeding content.

She was passionately fond of beauty, and the glories of Coolmeath stirred her to an enthusiastic worship.

Coolmeath seemed to belong to Hope and the boys by inheritance. Sallie and Mrs. Loring preferred the place on the Sound, which was more fashionable. Then for a month or so they rented a cottage at Newport, where Hope steadfastly refused to go. Coolmeath was a small house, having only two drawing-rooms, a billiard-room, library, and dining-room down-stairs with seven bedrooms above, but the halls were enormous, the lower one all fireplace, and the upper one all windows for the view.

The stables, however, had room for forty horses, and Hope saw to it that the space was well filled.

The house stood upon the highest point of the Pocantico Hills, with a sudden sweep downward just behind it, of almost declivitous descent. Fir and pine trees reared their symmetrical shapes against this slope, and at its foot dashed a brisk little stream, whose cooling sound rose on the absolute stillness with a refreshing murmur which could be heard from the house.

In front the ground sloped more gently into a gigantic lawn, sown by Hope's hand with California poppies. Trees — the beautiful trees which all the lovely Hudson region knows — grew here and there in more beauty and symmetry than the mind of man could have arranged them. A clump of silver birches grew quite by themselves, as if they knew their artistic value, while the maples and elms,

the larches, poplars, and spruces, mingled their different shades of green into an undulating glory which stretched straight away to a view of the distant Hudson and the purples and silvery mists of the opposite shore.

To the northwest, Haverstraw Bay, Scarborough, and even distant Ossining might be seen, the glories of such a vision thrilling the nerves of the beauty loving into actual reverence. "With verdure clad" the hills of Pocantico melted into a blue line which indicated the hills of Ramapo. Even the Catskills could be made out on a clear day, a faint wavery line of blue and silver mist. To the south the view swept away over fertile lowlands and meadows to the Sound, where at night the twinkling lights of the majestic steamers darted like fireflies. A little to the southwest might be seen the distant spires of Paterson, and Hope's ingenuity even suggested the experiment of signalling by means of mirrors to Jermyn at Montclair, when he went home once with Nuckols to spend Sunday. To Hope's intense delight the signals were a great success, while Nuckols's and Jermyn's admiration for Hope's cleverness increased fourfold. To their mind, not even the pinnacle which Coolmeath crowned was high enough for a girl of Hope Loring's nerve and delicious daring.

Gray rocks, half hidden in the soil, covered with

lichens and moss, were distributed over these hills, as if further to ravish the eye with a prodigality of beauty, and in and among all this beauty Hope reigned supreme, doing with the whole place as it pleased her.

Here Mammy and Ephum set out young trees and shrubs from the South, to be tested for the Northern winters. Here Hope laid out a golf-course and tennis-court, while in a protected, secluded meadow, hedged by trees, and concealed from all view from roadways, was a field where she practised boyish, forbidden sports. Could any boy of her age kick a football more deftly than this slim little maiden, whose muscles were of steel, and whose nerves never had made themselves known?

She boxed and fenced and swam and shot and rode as well as a man. The boys taught her all they knew. It appealed to their sense of humour to see a girl so keen on athletics, not because they were the fashion, but just because she loved them for themselves. She was amazingly strong, and as quick as a cat. Then, to cap all, she was bewitchingly pretty, with the prettiness of youth, which one felt sure would be real beauty later on. Boys like to teach pretty girls, even if they are sisters, and Jermyn, in addition, thought there was no one in the world quite like Hope. "The other fellows," too, hearing from Jermyn of what his sister could

do, were quite eager to show Jermyn all they knew, hoping thus to transmit their pet feats to Jermyn's sister, who, when the games were on, came and sat and watched the Tigers practising, wearing a sweater and a boy's cap, and who never had been known to cry, except once when the Tigers were beaten by the Elis.

It tickled Jermyn in particular to know that Hope's scorn of conventions was quite genuine, and that nothing with her counted so much as the things the boys love. But her father saw that, along with boyish sports, his little daughter was developing boyish traits of character which are sometimes lacking in otherwise very nice girls and very good women, — traits of loyalty and chivalry, and a truthfulness so downright as to be at times almost disconcerting. A high sense of honour, and a boyish consideration for the weak and helpless, made her quite unlike the girls whom her brother and cousin knew, and the boys cultivated these qualities in her the more assiduously.

Jermyn was the curious contradiction sometimes noticeable in families where a daughter is inclined to be a tomboy, — a gentle, thoughtful, considerate, understanding soul in the body of an athlete. He knew intuitively the rights of the conventions which Hope scorned because of ignorance. He often checked her untamed fancies and led her wild spirit

to respect society's laws. It sometimes seemed as if their traits and characteristics had become mixed somewhere in a previous existence, if such things are.

Hope was still her father's favourite, and observed with pride the added dignity which came to him from his larger field in New York. Great names in the financial world soon became associated with that of Loring and Company, and she took a not unnatural satisfaction in the success which came to them on all sides.

The family of the great financier, I. Stonington Stuart, for many reasons soon became best known to them. The chief reason of congenial natures or pursuits, however, was strangely lacking. No two families could have been more unlike, but while the Stuarts, who were narrow, bitterly and openly condemned the breadth of the Loring point of view, the Lorings never retaliated in kind. Only when directly attacked, Mrs. Loring permitted herself this one statement.

"I am not so conceited," Mrs. Loring said once to Mrs. Stuart, who was deploring the athletic tastes of the girls of to-day, with the laudable intention of calling Mrs. Loring's attention to Hope's over-inclination in that line, "I am not so conceited as to think that my manner of life and my ideals are the only ones worth living for. I brought my

children into the world without their volition. Their parents must have endowed them with what virtues and vices they possess. No matter how they turn out, we are to blame more than they. I never lose sight of that fact. And while their tastes may differ from Mr. Loring's and mine, they have the same right to pursue them, as I have to pursue mine. My children are free agents. They have read their Bible. I allow them to translate it, and apply it to suit themselves. They have been taught to observe closely. Let them apply that observation as they will. I never criticise them if they are broad where I am narrow, or if they are Puritanical where I am cosmopolitan. So, while I take much more satisfaction in Sallie's companionship than in Hope's, Hope is her father's idol, and she shall study football all her life if she will. She may even play it with her brothers. I have no doubt that she does."

It may be that Mrs. Loring overstated herself somewhat, because she knew her antagonist. Her visitor, Mrs. I. Stonington Stuart, had formulated a plan of life which was the direct antithesis of Mrs. Loring's. Mrs. Stuart's two sons were at Princeton, and well known to Jermyn and Laflin. She had adopted her niece, Amy Whiting, when the child's parents died, and she was practising her methods on these three with somewhat indifferent results. But

as to their indifference, Mrs. Stuart was the only one who did not recognise it. She was deeply religious, and devoted to society. These were her two passions. She was vain of her religion, for she had converted her husband during their engagement, and steered each of her children at an early date into the fold. After that, as she kept a watchful eye on them, she felt that they were safe. She often prayed for guidance, but what she really desired of the Lord was that He should approve her own methods. She would have felt gently incensed toward Him if her conscience had troubled her. Fortunately for her peace of mind, it seldom did. When it did, she called it "nerves," and called in a specialist. But nothing ever caused her to alter her ideals nor to broaden her views.

As her children were often in trouble, and were obliged to call in outside assistance, friends of the Stuart family knew how faulty Mrs. Stuart's plans of life were proving, but as she resented interference with the arrogance which only the bigot, and the religious bigot at that, can know, they got her children out of trouble, lent them money when Mr. Stuart stopped their allowances, kept them outwardly respectable, and listened quietly when Mrs. Stuart, in a modulated voice and deprecating manner, boasted of her method of training children.

But the Fitzhugh family were destined to touch

the Lorings more nearly, for Mrs. Fitzhugh was the undisputed leader of the exclusive set, and her only son, Norman, had fallen decorously in love, as became a Fitzhugh, with Sallie. The daughter, Laura, was destined to marry a title, and when Mrs. Fitzhugh discovered that the Lorings had quite a goodly showing of those admirable handles in the family, Mrs. Fitzhugh thawed perceptibly.

Hope frankly objected to both the Stuart and Fitzhugh families, root and branch. She said they had no object in life, and she sedulously kept out of their way. Stony Stuart she liked, and Amy Whiting she pitied. With Hope pity was akin to a warm liking — no more. She befriended Amy because she detested Mrs. Stuart.

“She leads that girl a dog’s life,” she confided to her father, and, greatly pleased that she had even a single girl friend, he encouraged their being together.

Thus life went on smoothly with the Lorings until Hope was seventeen. Then, as she showed no more inclination toward society than when she was a child, Mrs. Loring, after consulting Sallie, told Hope that there were certain conventions to be obeyed, and that she must have a “coming-out party,” be a *débutante* for one season, and then if she did not care for any more of it she could be excused. She would at least have done her duty.

Hope stormed at the idea. But Mrs. Loring was firm. Hope appealed to her father. He, to her intense surprise, sided with her mother and Sallie. And when the boys, on whom her hopes depended, went over to the enemy and said she must take a short turn at being a young lady, Hope gave in and gave in handsomely, as was her custom.

"I only ask one thing, mother dear, and that is, that you and Sallie will take all the responsibility off my shoulders. Set any day you please. Order and design anything which suits you. Invite any one you like, but don't even speak to me about it until the day before. I don't even want to know when it is to be until it is time to dress."

"Why, Hope, you extraordinary child, why not? Do you hate the idea so much?"

"No, I don't exactly hate it. I think it is an awful waste of time, that's all."

"Time which could so much better be employed in fencing?" said Sallie, laughing.

"Or football," said Hope, with unruffled mien. "The Elis have such a team this year that I actually have bad dreams about our game with them. If Cedric Hamilton were not coaching, I don't know what I should do! I'll die of chagrin if we don't win!"

"Hope," said her father, "it seems a pity to take you from everything you are so keen about and put

you into long skirts and make a young lady of you, but I think it is best. Just try it, daughter. Your mother coerces you very little. We have given you your own way nearly always, and to your credit be it spoken, you have never abused our confidence. But will you do this for us? ”

“ Indeed I will, you darlingest of darling fathers! If you asked me for the hair off my head in such a dear way as that, I’d give it to you! Perhaps,” with a sigh, “ it will be good for me! ”

“ You speak as if it were a course of German baths or a bottle of nauseous medicine! ” said Sallie. “ Why, Hope dear, it will be beautiful. You’ll be getting flowers and notes and invitations and books, and it will all be so new to you, you can’t fail to enjoy it.”

“ I shall hate it,” said Hope, calmly. “ But in order to go through with it at all you must let me be myself. I will not tell any society lies, and if I shock people with my views, you must not let it annoy you, nor lay it up against me.”

“ You’ll be careful, won’t you, Hope, and not shock people purposely or needlessly? ”

“ I’ll do my best. I promise that. Now not another word until the day arrives.”

As Hope ran out of the room with her hands over her ears, Mrs. Loring said :

“ Well, it really will be easier not to feel obliged

to consult her. Now all we have to do is to please ourselves. I will order her gown and everything for her. When shall it be?"

"Well, this is the 24th of October. Suppose we say Saturday, the 15th of November."

"That will do very well. I'll order the cards to-morrow. Sallie, do you know what I think?"

"No, mother; what?"

"I think that Cedric Hamilton is falling in love with Hope! Have you noticed it?"

"I can tell you something more startling than that, mother dear. I think that Hope is half-way in love with him — without knowing it!"

"Do you really? Oh, it may just be football. What is it that he does?"

"Coaches the team."

"What is coaching a team?"

"Why, it's teaching them, I think — er, I don't know. I never pay any attention to it. Only I know that every time Laflin or Jermyn speak his name, they almost cross themselves."

"Isn't it remarkable that Hope should be so interested? Now, of course, I hope Jermyn's college will win. I should be quite put out if it didn't, as my boy and nephew are on the team, but I think Hope would actually be ill. She hardly sleeps for thinking and agonising over it. On the day of the game we shall have our hands full in looking after her. But come, we must make out our list."

CHAPTER VIII.

JERMYN was in his room at Princeton, trying to fix his mind on calculus, having that day received a polite intimation from the faculty that a little more attention to study and a little less to athletics would be greatly appreciated by them, but the noise from the room across the hall was deafening.

Finally Van Tassel, who shared the rooms with him, burst in, waving his arms, and crying:

“Come over into Lord’s room, and give us a lift with Stuart’s monthly account. Stuart’s just full enough to be talkative, and from what he says his gov’nor must be a bird!”

Without more ado, Loring jumped up with a sigh of relief at the welcome interruption, and followed his cousin.

Lord’s room was so thick with smoke that at first Loring could not see how many men were there. Finally he made out the two Stuarts, Cuthbert and I. Stonington, Jr.; Lord, a freshman; Carter, a Southerner; and Glendenning, the captain of the football team. It was Lord’s room, which he had inherited from his brother, who had graduated the

year before, and being on the campus was somewhat gratefully shared by Carter, who had two weaknesses. One, he was always hard up, and Lord not only had plenty of money, but was always willing to help a fellow out. The other was that Carter suffered from thirst, and Lord, being lame, could always take his suit case and limp into places forbidden to freshmen, where you can get beer, certain to suffer no more from such freshness than a reprimand, where Carter or any other freshman would have got thrown out bodily, and the contents of the suit case confiscated.

Loring was received with unmistakable signs of approval. Two sofa pillows were shied at his head, and room made for him in the window-seat. Lord sat by the table writing what Stuart dictated.

Pipes were waved derisively at the football men, who were in training, and smoke was blown in their faces in clouds. Lord pulled his suit case from under the couch, and emptied half a dozen bottles of beer into his wash-pitcher. As he filled the glasses of the men, he limped up to Loring, and held the pitcher tantalisingly under Jermyn's twitching nose. Loring struck out, and Lord barely saved the beer.

"Get busy, Lord," cried Stuart, "and read Loring what you've got written."

"Foreign missions — \$10," read Lord.

Carter and Glendenning grinned.

“ Home missions — \$15.”

“ That’s bad,” observed Loring. “ That wouldn’t fool a baby.”

“ It goes with my mother,” said Stuart. He was lying back in a Morris chair, with his feet on the mantelpiece, smoking and singing “ Throw out the life line! ”

“ Laundry — \$32.87.

“ Books — \$105.75.

“ Stamps — \$15.”

“ Oh, hell! ” broke in Glendenning. “ Why aren’t you reasonable? ”

“ ‘ And two hundred dollars for soap and stamps
Is a trifle too much I fear! ’ ”

chanted Carter.

“ Not at all,” said Stuart. “ I gave a ‘ smoker,’ and issued invitations to all of you. I know what will go with my gov’nor. What’s the item for stationery, Lordy? ”

“ Sixty-five dollars! ”

“ There you are! Engraved invitations,” said Stuart.

“ But what rot! ” observed Loring. “ Isn’t your guv’nor a college man? Won’t he know? ”

“ He will not! ” said Stuart. “ Night school’s about all the old man can boast of.”

Loring and Van Tassel exchanged glances. Nothing would have induced them to say such

things of their fathers, even if it had been true. But this was one of the days when Stuart's initials of I. S. S. were translated by his friends to mean "I'm Seldom Sober."

Cuthbert Stuart was called for by voices outside, and he hurried away. The sounds came up to them clearly — the Princeton call.

"Hello-o-o, Cu-th! Hello-o-o, Cu-th!"

Then the door was pushed open, and Nuckols and Brewster stood blinking on the threshold.

"Stony here?" asked Brewster.

"Yep. What you want?" asked Stuart, sitting up.

"Write an excuse for me, and sign the old man's name to it. I want to be excused from chapel. As the guv'nor is an M. D., you'd better say that I have to take massage for my broken arm. I did, you know, for awhile. Here's one of the guv'nor's letters to show what a fist he writes. Make it kind of pompous and dignified."

Stuart reluctantly got up, and deftly made out the required note, copying Brewster's father's handwriting with a nicety which excited the wonder of all who saw it, and which had earned him the nickname of "Jim, the Penman."

"A thousand thanks," cried Brewster, burying his face in Lord's pitcher for a moment before leaving. "Your room is a life-saving station, Lordy!"

"You're a little lame lord on wheels," observed Nuckols, taking the pitcher from Brewster, and turning it upside down as a delicate reminder to the host.

"What are you fellows up to?" asked Brewster, idly, his real interest centring in Lord, who was producing beer bottles from his typewriter — or rather, the place into which his typewriter used to slide before he pawned it — with the ease of a Hermann.

"Making out Stony's monthly account," said Carter. "Do you know any new stunts?"

"I took six fellows to the last football game — cost me forty dollars. The old man kicked until I told him that they were fellows who were working their way through college. Then he allowed it."

"That wouldn't go with my old man," said Stuart. "Try a temperance dodge and hand me that pitcher."

"Subscribe to the W. C. T. U. and the Salvation Army!" suggested Nuckols.

"Put 'em down fifty each," said Stuart. "Thanks, Brass," he shouted after Nuckols.

"So long!" they called back.

"I've just had my eyes examined," suggested Glendenning.

"And I've been going to the dentist for three weeks," said Carter.

"Lord, write!" said Stuart, with a wave of his pipe.

“ ‘Trip to Philadelphia to have eyes examined by specialist, \$50.’

“ ‘Four trips to Philadelphia to dentist, \$250.’
What next? ”

“ Have you got down clothes and all that? ” asked Loring.

“ He’s got down a whole trousseau,” said Lord.
“ Dozens upon dozens of everything.”

“ Well, what are you hitting your gov’nor so hard for? ” said Loring, wondering why Stuart had got so red at Lord’s mention of the word “trousseau.”

“ Why, he caught me with a bun on the last time I went home, and took away my allowance for two months for it. So I’ve got to square myself somehow,” said Stuart.

“ Gee! I should say so,” said Carter. “ I’d work in a few fancy expenses on him. I wouldn’t stand such a thing, would you, Loring? ”

“ Loring doesn’t have to,” cut in Lord. “ His gov’nor keeps a bank account for him here in Princeton, deposits a certain amount every month, and old Jermyn checks against it till it’s gone. His gov’nor keeps him well-heeled, doesn’t he, Loring? ”

“ So does yours,” said Loring, with his empty pipe in his teeth.

“ My dad’s a brick,” said Lord.

“ My dad’s a gold brick,” said Stuart. “ And I’d like to work him off on somebody.”

"Try a few fancy items," suggested Lord. "I just bought a bath robe that I paid fifty dollars for."

"Run me in one at sixty," commanded Stuart. "Can't any of you fellows think of anything more that would appeal to exemplary Christian parents like mine?"

"Have you subscribed to the Y. M. C. A.?" asked Van Tassel.

"Or pew rent?" suggested Loring.

"God bless you, my boys," said Stuart. "Put them down twenty each."

"Or they're good for a hundred apiece," said Loring.

"Are they?" said Stuart, sitting up. "Well, work 'em for the limit, Lord."

"Why, don't you ever by any chance come in contact with knowledge of how much they are worth?" asked Loring.

"I never get any nearer to those things than I can help," said Stuart. "The odour of sanctity is so strong in our house that I carry camphor balls in my pockets to counteract it. I was licked to a standstill when I was a kid to make me go to Sunday school. I was run into the church at ten, professing things I didn't know, didn't believe, and hated. I signed the pledge at the point of a pistol — metaphorically speaking — when I was twelve, and celebrated it by buying a package of cigarettes

and two bottles of beer, and doing up both in the hayloft, where I was tenderly cared for afterward by the coachman. At fifteen I revolted from such lies as I was up to my eyes in, and confessed everything to my parents. As a delicate testimonial of gratitude for such truthfulness, my father stopped my allowance for three months, and my mother took to her bed in hysterics. The gov'nor said I had killed her, and made me go in and swear I didn't mean a word I had said. I vowed I wouldn't, but the mater was more obstinate than I was, and stuck to her bed until I gave in and perjured myself black in the face. Cuthbert said that I was a damned fool. *He* has never confessed anything. He has lied by the clock twenty-four hours each day to both of them, so they still regard him as a little white woolly lamb, while I am somewhat spotted, never having been thoroughly received back into favour since my confession of sin — the only strictly honest thing I ever did in my life, by Jove, and the thing I got the worst scorched for!"

The lad's tone was monotonously calm during this long speech. Only at the last a little bitterness crept in. "Now here's Cuth's weekly letter to my mother," went on Stuart. "Here's what she likes. I won't write such rot, but he does, and it's good for twenty every time. This one will bring more. He always drinks before he writes to her. He says

then he can drool along in this strain by the hour when he is tanked. Listen:

“ ‘MY PRECIOUS, BEAUTIFUL MOTHER: Your last dear kind letter did me so much good. The tears came into my eyes when you wrote how you suffer over Stony’s waywardness, and how you prayed for him after you cut off his allowance. How firm you are, dearest! But how you suffer for his sinfulness! I pray for him all the time, but strange to say, it does him no good. In fact, when he sees me kneeling down, he throws things at me. But do not blame him for this, dear mother. He does not care for religion as I do. If he did, he would be a more dutiful son and a kinder brother.

“ ‘I am so grieved to hear of how ill you have been, but am glad to know you felt well enough to go to the Lawrence’s ball. You so seldom take any pleasure, you dear, self-sacrificing mother! I would like to answer all the questions you ask me about Stony, but it would only hurt you to know. I have written Amy, because she can stand it, but it would shock you to know what plain language I had to use. You cannot understand the real thing. You have always closed your eyes to it, and there is no use in distressing yourself about it now.

“ ‘Pray for me, darling, for I need it. I feel so wicked when I think of you.

“ ‘ There is an awfully nice fellow here from Penn Yan who is working his way through college. The boys call him a “ fruit ” because he has no evening clothes. If you saw him, you angel of generosity, you would buy him a suit. I would like to, but I gave away the most of my allowance Sunday. The sermon touched me deeply.

“ ‘ Good-bye, dearest. I wish I could bear in your stead the pain you force yourself to suffer for Stony.

“ ‘ Your devoted son,

“ ‘ CUTHBERT.’ ”

“ Will that go down? ” asked Van Tassel, with dropped jaw.

“ Like an oyster. She’ll send him a hundred to buy clothes for some one who does not exist, and Cuth will divide with me, because, as you see, he has used me freely in this letter to form a black background for his whiteness.”

Loring and Van Tassel said nothing, although they felt deeply, but the other men gave vent to a few quiet ejaculations. It explained a good deal of their dislike of Cuthbert Stuart, “ Stony’s ” younger brother, who was something of a sneak, a trifle of a cad, and wholly unpalatable.

“ How comes it that Cuth is so pale and slim and little, when you are such a tall chap? ” asked Glen-denning.

"Cigarettes when he was seven," said Stuart, laconically. "Nobody knew it, not even I. Mater was lecturing him on the evils of tobacco. She said it would poison him. He didn't believe it, went and bought a cheap package, and began smoking. The neighbours caught him and told on him, but he swore they were lying, and mother believed him. Mother always believes what is most conducive to the success of her theories. She hates a brutal truth, and loves a pink and white lie. Don't hate Cuth any more than you can help, boys. I know he's a little skunk, but it isn't his fault."

Lord got up and did the honours with the beer. It was the only way in which he could fittingly express his emotion.

"Gee!" said Loring, biting savagely on the stem of his empty pipe.

Stuart flung himself on the couch with his chin in his hands.

"Loring, do you realise what a snap you have?" he asked.

"As how?" asked Jermyn.

"Well, first, your damned good luck in the selection of broad-minded parents. If I had a father like yours — one I could talk to and put my arm through his and go off and take a quiet smoke with — I'd, well, I'd — hang it! I'd worship the ground he walked on!"

"Doesn't your gov'nor smoke, even?" asked Lord, horrified.

"He has no endearing vices. To hear him tell it, he never does anything, nor ever did anything, and never even wanted to do anything. But I've often wondered what he does on that yacht of his from Friday to Monday. He tells mother that he talks business with *men*." He puffed at his pipe, "And she believes it. Pass the beer."

"You're a tank, Stuart."

"Because I was brought up to think that it was the next to the most awful sin in the world. I never saw a drop of even wine on the table, and my mother always pointed to a little bow of white ribbon on her dress whenever she heard any one mention it. So I've always kept some soothing stuff in bottles under my bed. Cuth always kisses her, especially when he's got a 'still' on, and she says, 'My, what do I smell?' and he says, 'Catarrh lozenges. They've got assafœtida in them. Don't they smell awful?' I keep away from her." Again a pause, during which only the puffing of pipes was heard. "So she says that Cuth has so much more heart than I have." Puff, puff. "And that's why she doubled his allowance!"

"Loring, did you ever work that father of yours?" asked Carter.

"Never had to."

"Don't you even have to lie to him?"

"Never."

"What a cinch!" groaned Stuart.

"And as to what you've just been saying," said Jermyn. "I never was even asked to go to church or Sunday school in my life. Mother and father went; we saw it and followed their example. We have always used wine on our table —"

"That's why you never get drunk," observed Stuart, waving his pipe.

"We were never forced to make Sunday any different from week-days — we played billiards, fenced, rode — did anything we felt like."

"That's why you observe the Sabbath now better than the rest of us," broke in Stuart.

"And when I did wrong, if I went to the gov'nor about it, we went away by ourselves, and lighted our pipes, and talked it over."

"And was that the end of it?" asked Stuart, eagerly.

"Well, after you've heard my gov'nor talk on any old subject, you feel that only a low-down dog would do the thing that you've done, and there is no more to be said."

"Having such a father as that must be one thing that makes Hope so splendid," said Carter.

Jermyn grinned.

"It beats all," he often said to Laffin, "how daffy the fellows are over Hope."

"My people jog along without any brag or blow, but I've never seen anybody whose example was so good and pleasant to follow as theirs. That's their religion," said Loring.

"My people profess every Christian virtue, and don't live up to a damned one of 'em. That's why I despise everything they profess, and hate the example they set. I'd rather go to jail than be such Christians as they are."

"Don't, Stuart!" said Loring. "I hate a prig as much as you do, and I don't often take the stump, but I hate to hear you talk that way of your own mother and father."

"It's a mere accident that they are my mother and father," said Stuart. "I couldn't be blindfolded, and pick 'em out of a bunch by any natural affection I am supposed to have for them."

"Your sentiments are unpopular, Stony," said Glendenning, rumpling Stuart's hair in a manner which was all friendliness and approval. "Come along, Loring. Hamilton will be down to-morrow afternoon late, and I want you boys to buck up."

"Gee, I'd like to have seen the team Hamilton played on," exclaimed Carter.

"My brother was on it," observed Lord, proudly.

"He was there when Hamilton got even with Scatchard of Cornell."

"Oh, tell about it," pleaded Carter, who worshipped as all freshmen do.

"Why, there was some dispute between Scatchard and Hamilton during the game, and the umpire decided in favour of Hamilton. With that, in the next half, Scatchard under the cover of a fierce scrimmage hit old Hamilton a dirty blow, and my brother saw it. Well, old Hamilton never said a word nor let on that he'd noticed, but he watched his chance. The ground was soft and slippery, and you know what shoulders old Ham has. Well, sir, the first time the umpire's back was turned, Hamilton got Scatchard's head down, and he filled his mouth with mud, — jammed it down his throat good, and smeared another handful into his eyes and nose! My brother said he never saw such a sight. Scatchard was game, and took his medicine, but he was crazy mad. And Ham just grinned at him, and the game went on without any more trouble. But don't I wish I could have seen Scatchard when he got up!"

"I wish Ham would give up his old brokerage business and tend entirely to football," said Loring. "Cedric Hamilton is the best coach Princeton ever had. A man like that is absolutely wasted in Wall Street."

"Come along," said Glendenning again. "It's

after ten. Van Tassel, you and Loring turn in this minute."

"All right. Say, Lord, will you meet the 11.10 train to-morrow morning? Hope is coming down to watch the practice. See that she's all right, will you?"

"Bet your life, I will. I'll take her to the Inn to lunch. Who's coming with her? Rebecca?"

"I'll go, Lord," said Carter, "if you are too busy."

"I've got to meet that train," said Stuart, flushing a little, "so I'll tend to your sister, Loring."

"Get out, Stony. You can't have Hope and your little Jew gal, too!"

"Don't you dare call Rebecca Leopold a Jew!" cried Stuart. But his voice was drowned in a shout of laughter.

"What would you call a girl that sprouted from such a name as that?" cried Lord.

"Well," said Stuart, softening down, "she may have a Jew name, but she hasn't a Jew nature. She's as true and sweet and —"

"Oh, drop it!" begged Glendenning. "You be careful or you'll say something to her that she can hang you up on. And remember this, Stony, never *write* to her on more than one bottle."

One by one they dropped away, singing with all the strength of their lungs. As the football men

left, the song which floated back to Lord and Carter was old Tark's "All over now."

"John took his best girl to a football game,
She was Bostonese refined,
She thought John was pious, and so did her Ma
And Pa, who sat behind.
No more will he take her to football games,
Although he loved her well,
The other side kicked a goal from the field,
And Johnny, he said — !

"And it's all over now!
And he's gone far away,
And the sad winds moan
With a sad, sobbing tone,
That it's all — over — no-o-ow !"

As the last melodious howl of this ditty ceased to echo, Carter, who was tired, turned in, but Lord was meditating over a final cigarette rolled from pipe tobacco between his long thin fingers.

"It must be catching," he muttered to himself. "Just half a minute," he said, as Carter turned over with a bounce and uttered an explosive sentence about damned light in his eyes which died away before it was finished.

To be sure, a malicious transom would let the light straight on poor Carter's pillow in the bedroom, but Lord sat down at the desk and began a letter to his father.

"We have just had a lot of fun over nothing

at all," he wrote, "but that's the way it goes at college. I wish you could have looked in on us. In my room to-night I've had the greatest crowd you ever heard of. There were Glendenning, the captain of the football team, Van Tassel, the half-back, and Loring, the centre. Then there was Seldom Sober, — you know that's what they call Stony Stuart, the son of your friend. Stony colours pipes better than any one I ever saw, and I got him to colour a daisy for you. I'll send it on as soon as he's satisfied with it. Then there was 'Brass' Nuckols, the champion heavyweight in boxing, and Brewster, of our class, who saved the day for us in the cane rush. It's nice to have a room that fellows like to come to, and Brewster said to-night that ours was a life-saving station."

Lord stopped and read it over.

"Now I call that a triumph of diplomacy," he chuckled. "I have hit the old man right where he lives, and yet haven't touched him for a cent. But there's a hint there with legs on it. I hope he'll tumble."

He dodged a boot which Carter threw at his head, turned out the light, and undressed in the dark.

The clock on Old North struck eleven as Lord's head touched the pillow.

CHAPTER IX.

ON the morning of the 15th of November, Hope came down to breakfast pale with anxiety. It happened that her father and mother were at the table, and even Sallie, who usually breakfasted in her room, was there nibbling at a plate of hot toast which had just been brought to Mrs. Loring.

"You needn't laugh," said Hope, as they greeted her. "It makes me sick to think of it. Do you know I couldn't sleep last night?"

"Why, Hope, this is really too much! You are positively silly!"

"I can't help it, mother. I've watched that team for six weeks. I know every play. I know —"

Mrs. Loring set down her coffee-cup suddenly. Her hand trembled.

"Hope, do you mean to tell me that this is the day of the football game?"

Hope gave a little laugh of derision.

"As if you didn't know. As if *everybody* didn't know!" she said.

"But —" said her mother. Then she stopped and looked at Sallie. Mr. Loring laid down his

paper. Hope looked from one to another in astonishment.

"Well, out with it! Who's dead?"

Sallie shook her head.

"Oh, Hope!" she said.

"Well!" cried Hope, stamping her foot impatiently. "What's the matter with you? Why don't you answer me? Father, make them speak!"

"Your tea, Hope—" began Mrs. Loring. "You said any day and not to tell you—"

Hope looked in bewilderment from one to the other.

"It's not to-day?" she whispered. "You hadn't forgotten the game, had you?"

"You said any day," pleaded her mother. But the crimson of mortification rose in her cheeks. She was honestly and genuinely ashamed of herself. The girl's white face was alarming.

Hope glanced in a hunted way from her mother to Sallie and back again. Then with a burst of tears she flew to her father's arms, and flung herself into his lap in a storm of weeping. Sallie and Mrs. Loring began to cry, too, and tears came into Mr. Loring's eyes as Hope's sobs shook her whole frame.

"Poor little girl! Libbie, dear, this really is too bad!"

"Oh, John, dear, don't say anything to make it worse! I feel too humiliated! To think that I, who

pride myself upon being such a considerate mother, should have overlooked such an important interest of Hope's! Even Mrs. Stuart couldn't have made a worse *faux pas*! Hope, darling, I am so sorry!"

"Oh, mother," murmured Hope, in a muffled voice, "don't talk that way! You know I don't lay it up against you. But you don't know — you can't know how I feel!"

"Can nothing be done, Libbie?" asked Mr. Loring, anxiously.

"Oh, no!" cried Sallie. "Not now! Think of all the people. We could never notify them. And what would they think when they discovered that we had put them off for a football game? We should be the laughing-stock of the whole town!"

"Little girl," whispered Mr. Loring, "can't you bear your disappointment bravely? We are all very, very sorry for you. Doesn't sympathy help some?"

Hope nodded without raising her head. Presently her sobs ceased, and they all waited expectantly, hoping that the worst was over. But even as she struggled to regain her composure, as the enormity of her disappointment rushed over her, she burst into a fresh paroxysm of weeping, and with a stifled word of excuse, she broke away from her father's restraining arms, and flew past the astonished butler to the door.

"She's gone to Mammy," said Sallie, wiping her eyes.

"Mammy is the only one who can comfort her," said Mrs. Loring. "I feel perfectly heart-sick over this, Sallie."

"I know it, mother. So do I. Do you realise that this is the first time we ever saw Hope cry?"

"You may know from that how deeply she was moved. Well," said Mr. Loring, rising, "we must make it up to the child in some way. Libbie, you are so clever, see if you can't think of something to modify her disappointment. If I could, I'd have the game played in the drawing-rooms to please her!"

"That wouldn't suit Hope at all. The open air and the slippery field and the mud and the sweaters are necessary accessories to her happiness," said Sallie.

"Poor little girl!" said her father again.

"Perhaps if she could see the boys for a moment —" said Mrs. Loring.

"Impossible, Libbie, dear. They are at the hotel in the hands of the trainers, and are not allowed to go anywhere," said Mr. Loring.

"But it is an excellent idea!" cried Sallie, "and perhaps in this case they might relent. Who is the one to ask?"

"Well, Glendenning, the captain, has authority —" began her father.

"I know him!" said Sallie, triumphantly. "And Jermyn had him at Coolmeath with the Stuart boys and all the rest of them that week Hope invited Miss Leopold down. I'll write him a note!"

"Or you might go to the hotel and call on him in person," suggested Mrs. Loring to her husband. "Explain our predicament, and ask him to let Jermyn and Laflin stop in for just a moment on the way to the game. He can trust them!"

"I'll do it!" exclaimed Mr. Loring. "A glimpse of the boys will do the poor child more good than anything I can think of. I'll urge Glendenning to make one exception to the rules, and consent in this instance. I think he will."

"I think so, too," said Mrs. Loring.

It lightened her heart a little to think of this small pleasure in store for Hope, and she and Sallie busied themselves about the finishing details for the afternoon, with consciences somewhat eased.

What Hope suffered, shut in her room with Mammy for comfort and company, no one will ever know, except those who have loved with similar passion a pursuit in which their nearest and dearest had no sympathy. The girl's sense of justice was so strong, she could not understand why her mother and Sallie had not taken sufficient interest in her

and Jermyn's sport at least to remember the day of the great game. Why, out of all the long and beautiful year, should they have happened to hit upon the one day when Hope's whole heart and soul longed to be elsewhere! As often as she dried her eyes and resolved to be brave, just so often would a recollection of the way the Tigers and the Elis would trot upon the field, all wrapped in blankets, bare-headed, ugly but glorious; or a picture of the massed humanity gathered in tens of thousands to witness the great contest; or the idea of the boys in the cheering section shouting themselves hoarse; or a recollection of the Princeton yell as it always rang out, tingling her blood, and as it would ring out to-day, and she, Hope Loring, not there to hear it; come to wreck her resolution and overwhelm her afresh.

At such junctures she fairly shrieked with anguish. Mammy was crying loudly, too. It was an appalling crisis.

"Lawd, Lawd, honey! Hush yo' cryin'! Yo' eyes will be a livin' sight dis atternoon. En ain't Marse Hamilton comin' to yo' pahty? You want to look pretty foh him, don' you?"

"He isn't coming," cried Hope. "He's little Poe's coach. Don't you understand? How could he?"

“Lawd, missy! I don’ know a coach from a carriage!”

At this Hope began to laugh, and Mammy took advantage of the lull to bathe Hope’s eyes and make her eat her luncheon.

“I heerd Marse Jermyn and Marse Laflin come in a minute ago! Listen yonder! Dey’s callin’ you! Git up quick en run down an’ tell ’em good-bye. But don’ cry no mo’.”

Mammy stood at the head of the stairs watching Hope’s precipitate flight in response to her brother’s call.

“Well, ef dat ain’t de oglies’ dress she got awn I ebber see! I don’ dar’ say nottin’ to her, she’s so crotchety to-day. Reckon I’ll leave huh Maw to ten’ to huh. I don’ see no reason why I can’t go down in de parlour an’ see de fixin’s. Dey must hab emptied ebery greenhouse in dis yere town foh us dis day from de wagginloads of flowers I’ve seen drive up.”

The old woman waddled down the slippery stairs to the main floor, where she discovered Ephum lost in admiration of the decorations. Florists’ men were bustling about adding last touches, and the fragrance of thousands of blossoms filled the air.

“Well, Ephum, it sho’ am grandeur, ain’t it?”

“Shuh! Hit cain’t hol’ a can’l’ to de pahties we used tuh gib in N’Orleans! Don’ you ’member Miss

Libbie's comin'-out pahty? Ole Marse gib a ball dey ain't froo talkin' 'bout yit!"

"What's that, Ephum, about my coming-out party?" said Mrs. Loring, entering just in time to hear the old man's remark.

"Laws, Miss Libbie, chile," said Ephum, bowing over and over, "I was jes' 'mindin' Mammy hyah, dat none ob dese yere New Yawk pahties could touch de balls yo' Paw used tuh to gib foh you when you was a young lady — wot lill Miss calls a deputy!"

"Débutante, Ephum," said Mrs. Loring.

"Yas'm, dat's wot I said. Didn' I, Mammy? Yas'm."

"Why, I think these are very much nicer, Ephum. I thought you had lived with us in New York long enough to like these new and modern ways."

"No'm, Miss Libbie," said the old man, "I cyan' say dat I has. I know it costs a heap. I ain't disputin' yo' generatiousness — but hit looks to me mo' horspitable, now lake at dinnah, to put all de vittles awn de table to onct, so's de company kin see wot you got foh 'em to eat, en kin pick an' choose. Looks lake to me, hit's sorter cheatin' de company to mek 'em eat one ting at a time, widout no hint from de sideboa'd dat dey gwine git mo'n dan dey kin see. Hit ain't a confidential nor a Christian way to treat folks."

"Noh you needn't tell me," added Mammy, "dat de white folks lakes hit no bettah dan de niggers."

"'Sides dat, Miss Libbie," Ephum went on, "when all's sed and done, de company don' git all wot dey useter en my time. I ain't nuvver seed de gemmen unbuckle dey ves' straps, nor de ladies stretch deyselves lake dey couldn't hol' no mo'! No'm, at New Yawk dinnah-pahties, hit's too much shufflishness ob de dishes en too little vittles."

"Well," said Mrs. Loring, laughing, "perhaps you are right, Ephum. But whether we adopt your suggestion or not, you and Mammy shall have all your dinner put on the table at once, in a Christian and confidential manner."

"Thank you, Miss Libbie," said the old man, bowing. "Me'n' Mammy sho' would admire to hab hit so."

"Now," said Mrs. Loring, straightening a valuable blue Persian silk rug which hung upon the wall, "I must hurry. Ephum, pick up those leaves and move that palm back further."

"Miss Libbie, y'all does mighty cuyous t'ings up North hyah. Wot mek you hang dat piece ob carpet awn de wall? En N'Olyans we nuvver had no carpets dat was too small to tromp awn."

"It isn't too small, Ephum. It's too valuable. Mr. Loring has one of the finest collections of rugs in New York. He paid more for that little rug hanging

there than my father paid for you and Mammy put together when he first bought you."

"Dee Lawd!" cried the old couple in unison. They fingered the silky thing with great respect.

"Now, I must go and dress. Mammy, you go dress Miss Hope, and send Eugénie to me."

"Miss Libbie, you bettah watch out foh lill Miss to-day," said Mammy. "I prognosticates dat she's gwine disgrace us wid some ob huh mad pranks. She's got de debbil in huh eyes to-day."

"Well, she must have drowned him out with her tears by this time," answered Mrs. Loring. "She cried all the morning, as you well know, because I forgot that this was the day of the Princeton-Yale game on Manhattan Field."

"Sho' 'nuff!" said Ephum. "En bofe our boys en it. Po' lill Miss would 'a' bin in it, too, ef she could 'a' had huh way!"

As Mrs. Loring left the room, Hope and Jermyn and Laflin entered with their arms around each other like three boys, all talking excitedly. Indeed, one would have been at a loss to distinguish between them at first, for Hope wore a most extraordinary costume, consisting of a moleskin skirt and a bodice of orange and black striped satin and velvet, to imitate the Princeton sweater.

"How do you like my dress?" asked Hope, suddenly. "I designed it myself."

Both boys whistled, as she stood off to let them look at her.

"Don't you like it?" she cried, anxiously. "I had it made to wear to the game, but as I can't go, I'm going to wear it to my tea to show my loyalty to Princeton."

Jermyn shouted with laughter, so that Laflin was obliged to pound him on the back.

"Hope," he said, when he had got his breath, "sometimes you are so innocent I think your brain is only half-baked. You are primitive. You're wild."

"Why, what's the matter with it? Isn't it all right? Couldn't I have worn it to the game?"

"Certainly not! Why, I'd have had the life guyed out of me if I'd let a girl wear such a looking thing. And as to your wearing it to-day — I can just hear Sallie screech when she sees you."

"Hasn't Aunt Libbie ordered any glad rags for you to wear to-day?" asked Laflin.

"I hadn't thought, but I suppose so," said Hope, her lip quivering. "Oh, why was I born a girl, and for ever deprived of everything worth while! It makes me sick to think of it."

"Poor old chap!" said Jermyn. "I'm devilishly sorry for you to-day, if that'll do you any good."

"Oh, boys, you don't realise. I'd give my two eyes and my two ears, and both my feet if I could

cut this pink tea and go to the game! Tell me again about Yale's weak points. Has Poe improved under Cedric Hamilton's coaching? I wish he had coached you two! Here, put the ball down, and let's see you kick, Laflin," said Hope, snatching the pigskin from under her brother's arm, and placing it.

The boys, always incited by Hope's daring, looked apprehensively at the bric-à-brac, but finally, as Laflin made a mighty kick, the pigskin rose nobly, and flew into the other room beyond their sight.

All five held their breath, expecting to hear the crash of broken glass, but as only a soft thud reached their ears, Hope clapped her hands delightedly. She ran for the ball, and brought it back with her.

"That was very good, but Cedric Hamilton showed me this trick. He gives it more this sort," said Hope, and before the boys could stop her, she had kicked the ball even more deftly than Laflin.

They watched its circling career in astonishment.

"Well, I swear, Hope! You certainly are a wonder! When did Hamilton show you that?"

"One night when we were playing billiards. He only showed me how. Of course I didn't do it before him. But I've done it every day at Coolmeath all summer."

"Well, that would be a goal from the field any time, if I could only do it," said Laflin.

"Poe will. Remember to let him try it if it comes to a show-down," said Hope, anxiously.

They were earnestly discussing this point when Mason, the footman, entered, with his arms filled with boxes of flowers.

"For you, Miss," he said.

Hope looked at him in despair.

"Well, open them, and bring the cards to me afterward, telling me which is which. I'm busy now."

"Very good, Miss," said Mason.

The boys began to move toward the door, Hope following, with a detaining hand on their arms. As they looked significantly at their watches and at each other, the girl braided her fingers together for a last desperate appeal.

"Lafin, won't you and Jermyn drop in here on your way down-town, and tell me about the game? I'll be mad to hear a few of the details."

"Can't, Hope, dear. We'll be in these clothes and *rotten!*"

"Well," groaned Hope, "come home and dress then! The cards say until seven o'clock. You'll have time for a bath and everything!"

"And miss all the fun," cried Jermyn. "Why, Hope, you don't know what you're asking. We are going to eat to-night for the first time in three months. Do you take that in?"

"And smoke!" added Laffin. "And stay up after ten o'clock! Think of that!"

"Well," said Hope, desperately. "I'll tell you what I'm going to do! If you don't promise to stop in here for just ten minutes, just as you are when you come from the game, I'll put on boy's clothes and go down-town and hunt you up!"

"Oh, Miss Hope, honey!" cried Mammy, in agony. "Don' say dat, pretty!"

Ephum laughed delightedly at Hope's suggestion. Mammy turned and cuffed his ear.

"Hush yo' mouf, you black fool! How you reckon I gwine breng up dat chile to be a gal steddier a boy ef you encourage her en her mischievousness by yo' fool laffin'!"

The two boys looked at each other.

"We're up against it," said Jermyn. "She's just game enough to do it."

"Well, it is rough on her to have to miss the game that she's fairly lived for for the last three months. *I* say to humour her that far," said Laffin.

"All right, Hope, we'll promise to come for ten minutes, no matter how we look, nor what people think. But if anybody is shocked, it will be your fault. Remember that!"

"Well, Miss Lawrence won't be shocked," cried Hope, with a mischievous smile.

"Is she coming?" asked Jermyn, quickly.

"Yes, Sallie has asked her to assist in the dining-room."

"And Miss Cox, is she asked?" said Laffin, eagerly.

"Yes, Sallie invited her, too. So now you'll come for them if you won't for me."

"Darned queer that a girl would cut a game like this for a rotten old afternoon tea," observed Jermyn, much chagrined. "I counted on their being there to-day!"

"Oh, it's just as well to propitiate the family of the beloved object," cried Hope, laughing.

"Is that the idea, do you think?" asked Laffin. But Jermyn cut in gloomily:

"Not on your life! They are coming because they want to. They like pink teas. They're that kind."

"Isn't it queer," sighed Hope, "that people nearly always fall in love with the opposite types. Now *I* shall probably fall in love with a 'poler,' who won't know a tennis racket from a baseball bat."

"Poor old girl!"

"Now this *is* good-bye, Hope! We're dead sorry for you, but don't howl, will you?"

"No, I won't howl. You've done the best you could by promising to come back, and I'm very grateful."

"That's a brave old chap."

"Oh, good luck! Good luck!" cried Hope, as they tore themselves away. "Remember my heart will be with you, and Mammy will be 'kunjering' for you with all her might!"

She tried to laugh, but it ended in a little sob. As she stood watching them from the window, Sallie, beautifully gowned in scarlet, which set off her dark, dreamy style to perfection, came in for a final inspection of the rooms before the guests arrived, and discovered Hope.

"What are you doing, dear?" she asked.

"Nothing," said Hope, dolefully, turning around and rubbing a tear from her cheek.

"Are you crying? Why don't you dress?"

"I am dressed!"

"I mean for the reception."

"So do I."

Sallie put up her lorgnon, for her big dark eyes were near-sighted, and looked at her sister.

"Hope Loring, do you mean to tell me that you call that awful thing a dress?"

She went nearer, and laid her hand on Hope's arm.

"Why, it's velvet and satin!" she cried. "I thought it was Jermyn's sweater."

"It's all right, isn't it?" said Hope, quizzically. "I designed it myself."

"All right? Why, Hope, dear, it is the most

frightful thing I ever saw in all my life. Please, dearest, go and change it. Mamma ordered a sweet white taffeta one for you."

"I won't!" cried Hope, furiously. "I don't want to be a young lady and have flowers sent to me. I don't want lovers like yours! I don't want to be grown up! I want to go to the football game and see how it's going! I want to sit on the Princeton side right next to the cheering section. That's where my seat is! Here's the ticket! You can see for yourself. I want to yell with the boys. Rah! Rah! Rah! Tiger! Siss! Boom! Ah! Princeton! I've got the best mind in the world to go, anyway! What could any of you do if I sneaked? You could take my place and have all of my flowers, Sallie. Every one! And you'd help me to make it up with the family afterward, wouldn't you?"

"Oh, Hope, dear," cried Sallie, alarmed by the wild manner and untamed look in the eyes of her sister, "don't talk of such a thing. Come now. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll send a messenger to the Princeton Club, and have him telephone all the points of the game to one of the servants — Mason would be the best — and as fast as they arrive they will be delivered to you, if you will stand with Mamma and me and receive properly. Will you?"

"Well," said Hope, reluctantly, "I will."

"And," urged Sallie, knowing Hope's vulnerable

point, "will you wear the white gown? See how like a fright this makes me look. I stand next you, and it ruins my costume. Won't you wear the white for my sake — if you should wear a little bow of orange and black ribbon to show your loyalty? I'll make you one while you dress!"

"You're awfully kind, Sallie, dear, to try so hard to help me over a hard place! And I'll wear the white to please you. I only meant to wear this to the game, anyway, but Jermyn roared when I suggested it. Why can I never do any of the things boys do? Why are boys' ways so absurd in a girl? How do I always manage to be in the wrong and make such a fool of myself?"

Sallie put both arms round her sister, and kissed her, saying, tenderly:

"You do not make a fool of yourself, darling. We understand you, in spite of our seeming carelessness. You ought to have been a boy, only you are so pretty as a girl, I couldn't spare you."

Hope rubbed a stray tear from her cheek, and smiled faintly at her sister's praise. Sallie observed it, and added:

"Oh, Hope, you don't know how Mamma and I regret this mistake of ours, and we are going to do all we can to make you enjoy your afternoon. Now fly!"

Hope turned a beaming face on Sallie, and dashed up-stairs three at a time.

"I'll meet them half-way — it's only fair," muttered the girl to herself, "but I shall take care to make myself jolly unpopular to a few of the mighty ones, so that they will soon find out that they can dispense with my services."

When she came bounding down-stairs a quarter of an hour later she had on the despised white taffeta, but the whole front of it was covered by a large knot of orange and black chiffon which fell to the hem of her skirt.

"There, Sallie Loring! I've put it on for your sake, as I promised!"

Hope beamed on her sister, expecting to be praised. Sallie looked disconcerted.

"But, Hope, dear, you've disfigured it with that awful scarf. This is what I intended you to wear," said Sallie, showing a small butterfly bow of orange and black ribbon.

"Oh, that's all right! I'll wear that, too!" said Hope, seizing it and thrusting it into her hair. "How's that?"

Sallie simply shook her head and sighed. Hope turned as Mason entered the room, with his arms full of the bouquets he had taken from the boxes as Hope ordered.

"Compliments of Mr. Van Twiller Morris," said Mason, handing her purple orchids.

"I don't care much for orchids. They're such an unnatural flower."

"Compliments of Mrs. Grundy Fitzhugh," said Mason, untangling a glorious bunch of American beauties.

"Now I can't carry trees like that," said Hope. "Can't Mason put them in a vase, Sallie?"

"Presently," said Sallie. "I think I would pay her the compliment of allowing her to see you with them when she arrives."

"I forgot that she is Norman's mother, and that you may be her daughter some day."

"Hope!" said Sallie, frowning in the direction of the impassive Mason.

"I forgot," murmured Hope, with her quick blush. "What's that you have, Mason?" she added. The footman held out a large bouquet of violets in the form of a football, tied with long dark blue ribbons.

"Compliments of Mr. Ralph Shaw," said Mason, handing the card.

"Oh, the wretch!" cried Hope, reading it. "Sallie, listen to this! He's a Yale man, you know. He says, 'Hoping yet without Hope that these may some day be Hope's colours for ever!' That is a better outlook for love-making than for football!"

Here, Sallie, you must carry these. I must stick to Princeton to-day."

"Compliments of Mr. Cuthbert Stuart," said Mason, handing Hope a large bouquet of pink and white roses.

"Any more?" said Hope, patiently.

"These are only a few of them, Miss. And more arrive all the time," said Mason.

"Well, the people are begining to come," said Hope. "I'll leave it to you, Mason, not to get the cards mixed, but these really are all that I can manage."

"I can see that you are going to be very popular, Hope, dear," said Sallie. "I find that more people are aware of my tomboy sister than she would have believed. Here is young Stuart starting in well."

"The idea!" cried Hope. "Why, the very roses are larger than he is!"

"Yet his father is a great power in the financial world and an intimate friend of father's. However, I may as well prepare you for the one whom *I* have set apart for you to-day, and that is the Honourable Gerald Edwardes-Edwardes, the son of Lady Edwardes-Edwardes, whom we met at Homburg before I was out, and while you were still at Mme. St. Cloud's. He is a great catch, and you might marry him if you wished."

"Marry!" cried Hope, scornfully. Then she

stopped suddenly, and Sallie following Hope's eyes saw Cedric Hamilton, enveloped in a long ulster which came to his heels, enter, bearing the facsimile of Ralph Shaw's football of flowers, only these were of Black-Eyed Susans, and the streamers were of orange and black. Hope's eyes danced when she saw them, and her breath came and went rapidly.

Hamilton came up to Hope swiftly, holding out his gift, and stammering:

"Excuse me for coming in this way, but I wanted to bring you these myself, because I — I —"

"Oh, you dear thing!" cried Hope, with a little scream of delight, and dropping all the other flowers.

Sallie considerably walked away. She smiled to think Hamilton had not even seen her.

"Oh, Hope!" said Hamilton, tremulously taking both her hands in his.

"Oh," stammered Hope, withdrawing them, and blushing over her impulsive speech. "I — I meant the flowers. I was so pleased!"

"Of course you did!" said Hamilton, abashed. "Of course! How stupid of me!"

"Not at all!" said Hope. "It *was* dear of you to remember how I would feel to-day and bring me these!"

"Not at all," said Hamilton, straightening up.

"But I say it *was*!" cried Hope, with flashing

eyes. When she had made a concession, she did not propose to have it waved aside by a conventional remark.

"Oh, well, then it *was!*" said Hamilton, pacifically.

Hope smiled, and Hamilton, seeing a card that she had dropped, stooped and picked it up for her.

"Oh, that is so clever. Let me read it to you," she said, dimpling. "A Yale man sent me violets with this. He says, 'Hoping yet without Hope that these may some day be Hope's colours for ever!'"

"The conceited ass!" said Hamilton, a dark flush mounting to his face.

"Not at all," said Hope. "It's very pretty!" She looked up at him. "And very poetic!"

Hamilton stiffened up.

"And very clever!"

He looked so discomfited that Hope smiled sentimentally, and murmured:

"'Hope's colours for ever!' I wonder if he meant it."

"I wonder!" said Hamilton, ironically.

"You are very rude," said Hope, severely.

But Hamilton looked so thoroughly dejected that Hope relented, and said, shyly:

"It was very kind of you to come to-day. It was an accident, having my coming-out party the

fifteenth, but Mother and Sallie forgot. I—I was afraid you might prefer the game to me!”

Hamilton pulled out his watch.

“Oh, I do! I mean—I mean—”

“You meant just what you said!” said Hope, indignantly. “You do prefer the game to me! But how you can I don’t see! A brutal game, not fit for gentlemen, *I* call it. Worse than a prize-fight!”

Hamilton stared at her in blank and undisguised astonishment.

“Why, I thought you were crazy about football! Jermyn and Laflin told me that at Coolmeath—”

Hope lifted her little pink chin defiantly.

“What do those boys know about what a girl really thinks!” she said.

“What does any man, for that matter!” said Hamilton, a trifle bitterly. “Perhaps you don’t like those flowers, if a man may not go by what you say! Perhaps you would rather have had roses?”

He reached for them as he spoke, but Hope drew back.

“No, indeed! I wouldn’t be so rude as not to carry a gift!”

Hamilton laughed, and pointed to the flowers she had dropped to take his.

“Did you *buy* these, then?”

Hope gently spurned them with her foot, and

noted with satisfaction that he lingered with her, although the game would be called in a few minutes. She was conscious of a strange exhilaration in his presence which was so new to her that she had not analysed it. But suddenly Hamilton pulled out his watch again, and said, nervously:

"Well, I must be going now, or the game will begin without me."

"Oh," said Hope, in a shocked voice, "you aren't really going, are you? After all I've said?"

"Of course," began Hamilton, desperately, "if no one else were to be here, and I could talk to you —"

"But you can," said Hope, eagerly. "I won't speak to another soul!"

"But you'd have to," said Hamilton, dejectedly. "This thing is being given to introduce you into society."

"You're just making excuses!" cried Hope, savagely.

"No, I'm not," said Hamilton, eagerly. "I'd stay in a minute if I were dressed! See," he said, opening his coat, "I'm in my business clothes. I'm just from the office, and I took an automobile in order to have a moment here with you."

"Clothes!" cried Hope, scornfully. "The idea of a man caring for what he has on! I tell you

that you may remain at my reception in those clothes. Nobody will notice."

"Not notice!" cried Hamilton, throwing up his hands in despair. "I'd be torn to pieces to-day, and the fragments of me would be served up in *Town Topics* next week."

"No, now," cried Hope, wheedlingly, "you don't believe that! And you'll stay to please me, won't you?"

"You make it very hard for me," said Hamilton, doggedly, "but I must go. The game —"

"Well, good-bye!" said Hope, abruptly. "I was only teasing you. I really don't want you a bit. In fact, I've promised —"

"Oh, don't say that," cried Hamilton. "You must know — you must feel — you must have seen —"

"Oh, the people are beginning to come!" cried Hope, in ecstasy. "This is my first affair. I wonder if I shall have a gay winter, and as many beaux as Sallie! Good-bye, Mr. Hamilton!"

Hamilton made no attempt to reply, but hurried away. He turned back at the door just in time to see Hope, in a rage, tear off a handful of Black-Eyed Susans, and scatter the leaves on the floor. He hesitated a moment in mortified amazement, then groaned, and dashed out. If he had waited a moment longer, he would have seen her stoop swiftly

over the torn leaves in sudden contrition, and thrust a few of them inside of her bodice.

She watched the door for some time after Hamilton's departure, as if expecting him to return. Then, as if unwilling to believe her eyes, she summoned the footman.

"Mason, did Mr. Hamilton really go?"

"Yes, Miss, I gave him his hat and stick, and Harris called his automobile, and —"

"That will do."

"Very good, Miss."

This episode served to turn Hope's excited frame of mind into recklessness. The young girls who had been asked to assist began to flutter in, Miss Cox and Miss Lawrence being among the earliest arrivals. Amy Whiting, toward whom Hope's heart went out because of her aunt's fanaticism, was the one Hope generally put herself out for, which was surprising to Mrs. Loring and Sallie, for Hope's distrust of girls was well known to them. They were pleased at Hope's selection of Amy, however, for they sympathised with her in her narrow environments and tried to give her all the liberty they could.

Amy looked at Hope curiously, but it was not with a malicious envy.

"Oh, Hope, what a beautiful time you are going to have this winter! I never saw such flowers!"

"Here," said Hope, pressing an armful of roses

into Amy's delighted embrace, "the people who sent those to me probably don't even know whether they sent orchids or dandelions, and these just match your dress. You may have them to take home with you, if you like."

"How generous you are, Hope Loring!"

"I don't call it generosity to give away something that I don't want or need, and that I have heaps more of," said Hope. "If I gave you the only rose I had and couldn't get another, I might feel generous, but I don't in this case."

"But you are often generous with things you really want," said Amy. "I've seen you."

"I'm not a pig," laughed Hope, "and it does amuse me to hear people give away things and say, to urge their acceptance, 'But I don't want it, so you're quite welcome to it!' I often wonder if they wouldn't have been welcome to it, or wouldn't have got a chance to be welcome to it if the donor had wanted it."

"Daughter," said Mrs. Loring, coming up just here, "come and stand by me now, I want you to meet my friends."

Hope was plainly restless under the ordeal. The colour fluttered in and out of her face and her replies were of the briefest. True, nobody said anything calling for a reply, and Hope's eager mind resented it. Why need they all say the same things?

Why need their words be polite and their manner of looking her over so insulting? Would it not be better to say something which receptions never heard, and not look a young girl over as if she were a slave on sale in a slave market? Hope's impatience was fast becoming too much for her. Mischievous gleamed in her eye. Sallie saw it and trembled.

The next young woman to approach was a tall, beautiful girl, whom nature had evidently intended to be attractive. Her great violet eyes were meant to be gentle and tender in expression, but a few seasons in society had given the eyes much to see, to compete with, to scorn, and evidently little to admire, for the girl's whole manner was marked by an insolence which was a futile attempt at pride. Hope objected to being swept by those long-lashed velvet eyes as if she were on exhibition for her points. Miss Fitzhugh had heard Hope heralded as a beauty, possibly as *The Beauty* of the coming season. Consequently she met her with a challenge in her attitude which fired Hope's blood.

Hope on the other hand knew that Miss Fitzhugh had been singled out by the Stuarts as a suitable wife for Stony, but with poor Stony's irrepressible habit of always doing the thing most unpalatable to his parents, in the week all the young people had been at Coolmeath, Stony had been irresistibly attracted by Rebecca Leopold, who had grown into a truly

lovely and refined girl. Hope was naughtily conscious of all this, and a little gleam came into her eye as Miss Fitzhugh drawled out:

“Isn’t it lovely weather?”

“Perfectly bully for football,” said Hope, genially.

Miss Fitzhugh drew herself up haughtily, and viewed Hope through her lorgnon.

“Football! Er — do you — play football, yourself?”

“I do!” said Hope, defiantly. “It is excellent exercise. Do you play football?”

“I?” said Miss Fitzhugh, colouring with indignation. Then, as her colour sank to its usual paleness, she added, scornfully, “Do I look like it?”

“No,” said Hope, laughing mischievously, “you look as though you played checkers for exercise.”

“Insolent!” exclaimed Miss Fitzhugh, closing her lorgnon with a snap.

“Well, you asked me to tell you,” said Hope, with a little bow, “so I did.”

Miss Fitzhugh turned away hastily, and joining a little group of girls composed of Miss Lawrence, Miss Cox, and Amy Whiting, she whispered an account of her conversation with Hope to them, expecting sympathy. Under ordinary circumstances they would have accorded it to her, but Miss Fitzhugh forgot that Jermyn and Laflin were attentive

to two of the girls, and that Amy Whiting was the best friend Hope had.

"What a shame!" said Miss Cox.

"Yes, wasn't it?" cried Miss Fitzhugh.

"I mean that in addition to Hope Loring's being so much prettier than any of us she should be so clever. It's almost too much, isn't it, Genevieve?" cried Gladys Cox.

Genevieve Lawrence laughed. Miss Fitzhugh looked offended. Miss Cox looked appreciatively at Miss Whiting. She knew that Amy would tell Hope, and she counted on Hope's telling everything to Laflin Van Tassel. All three knew how loyal the Lorings were to each other.

"I don't see anything in the least clever in what she said. She was simply rude," said Laura Fitzhugh, turning away.

"I wish more people would dare to serve you to a sample of Hope Loring's rudeness then," murmured Gladys Cox when Miss Fitzhugh was out of hearing. "It would do you good." They took up the thread of their conversation where Miss Fitzhugh had broken it off, all speaking at once, yet each hearing what all the others said.

"I am having a pink-flowered chiffon made up over —"

"That will be sweet. I'm having my pale blue velvet that I spilled coffee on, made over with —"

"I was wondering what you would do with that. My white liberty silk —"

"Oh, I know. But what shall I do with my biscuit cloth?"

"One of my hats is white maline over maidenhair fern, with the crown —"

"I can't wear green. But my pink mirror velvet hat —"

"My new one is red, and I have an automobile coat to match, with big pearl buttons —"

"Do you think I could wear a princess gown, or do you think I am —"

"No, you'd look — say, girls, have you seen Cuthbert Stuart's new stick? The knob is so big he can't get it into his mouth, so he just — oh, I beg your pardon, Amy! I forgot —"

"Oh, don't mind me!" cried Amy. "Say what you like about Cuthbert, but not a word against Stony. He's my boy!"

"Has he had any more rows with your uncle and aunt lately?" asked Genevieve Lawrence.

"He is always having them, because he won't lie. Cuthbert and I say nothing unless we are driven into a corner. Then we tell her what we think will be soothing. I don't know what she will do to-day. Mrs. Loring's theories about bringing up children are so contrary to Aunt Mabel's that the

very spirit of this family is like a red rag to a bull to her."

"I am going to manage to be near them when your aunt comes, then," said Gladys Cox. "For I would so love to hear what Hope would say if Mrs. Stuart should be offensive."

"She is always offensive," laughed Amy.

"How do you stand on bridge?" asked Gladys.

"Look out!" whispered Amy, "Aunt Mabel is coming up behind you. She would have me up before the church if she knew I played. How do you stand, Genevieve?"

"Oh, my! I've lost steadily for the last two weeks!"

"I had bad luck at Newport all summer," said Amy. "I was in a hole most of the time, but what do you think I did?"

"To get more money? I don't know. Do tell me, if you don't mind. Perhaps I can do it."

"Why, I sold my horse. You know I can't touch my money till I am twenty-one. And Cuthbert told Uncle Ian that the horse went lame and had to be shot. It worked twice. But the third time Uncle Ian said it was the groom's fault, and discharged him. So we had to get him another place."

"Amy Whiting! I never heard of such tricks as

you and those Stuart boys play on your uncle and aunt!" said Gladys.

"I don't blame her!" cried Genevieve Lawrence. "If your people won't let you have any fun, what can they expect, but to be tricked?"

"Aunt Mabel not only believes in being good herself, but she tries to force others to be good in just her footprints. The other night she was dining with the De Groots, and she worried poor old De Groot nearly to death until it came to the champagne. He offered her some, and she said, 'I don't drink wine myself, nor do I approve of wine-bibbers!' Old De Groot turned to her, and roared out so everybody at the table could hear him, 'Madame, I think it would be a good thing for all of us if you got drunk occasionally!'"

"Oh! Oh!" cried the girls, laughing. "How perfectly lovely! Can't you just imagine it?"

"But," cried Genevieve Lawrence, returning to the subject of bridge, "how did you happen to think of selling your horse?"

"Because they must give me a horse to ride! People would talk if they didn't. They don't like to be talked about. I've a nasty one now, and I mentioned it to Van Twiller Morris, and he walked right up to Uncle, and told him that the beast wasn't fit to ride, and Uncle told me yesterday

he had bought me another. I am to try him tomorrow."

"Will you sell this one?"

"Certainly, I will, or bet him! Hush! Here's Aunt Mabel. Now you saunter over by the Lorings and hear what she says. She won't talk before me, but you come and tell me."

Mrs. Stuart believed in herself. One could tell that at a glance. As she presented herself before Mrs. Loring, Miss Lawrence and Miss Cox drew near.

"Ah, how do you do, Mrs. Stuart?" said Mrs. Loring.

"Very well indeed. You have a lovely day for your reception. The air is cold and crisp."

"Ah, don't speak of the outside atmosphere to-day," said Mrs. Loring, laughing. "I am in disgrace because I forgot it was the day of the Princeton-Yale game, and poor Hope had set her heart upon going. I am literally on my knees to the child in my contrition."

"Hush," said Mrs. Stuart, laying her hand on Mrs. Loring's arm, "never let your children know that you are in the wrong. It is bad for them."

"Oh, but I do!" cried Mrs. Loring. "Do not you?"

"I try never to be in the wrong," said Mrs. Stuart.

“Oh, but I think to put your arms around your girl and tell her that you know you have been wrong, but that you are desperately sorry and ashamed, couldn't be bad for her! She certainly would respond to it and respect you for it. Isn't it what you teach them to do?”

“Certainly. I have done my duty by my children, but I never admit that I am wrong. I sometimes say, ‘I am sorry that my views do not fall in with yours, but I cannot alter my principles.’”

“I take care not to have my principles too difficult,” said Mrs. Loring, gently. “I would rather not be quite so righteous myself than to compel my children to deceive me in order to live amicably with me.”

“There is no such thing as driving one's children to deceive. The duties of children to their parents are sharply defined. Properly brought-up children perform them and love their parents for enforcing them.”

“I would rather command love than demand it,” said Mrs. Loring.

“Ah, Mrs. Loring, I am afraid that such looseness as you preach is demoralising. From what I hear of the sports you allow —”

“Now don't scold Mamma any more, dear Mrs. Stuart,” begged Sallie. “We are an old-fashioned set, and we believe in letting our boys do things in

their own house rather than driving them to our neighbours' barns or into saloons. It is our way."

Mrs. Stuart's face flushed, and she gripped her fan tightly. She quite longed to tell Sallie what she thought of such unprincipled proceedings.

She turned away with little hectic red spots in her cheeks, drawn thither by the thought of the wickedness — the unpardonable culpability of those who did not agree with her. She wondered if those girls standing near had overheard her conversation. She hoped they had. It gave Mrs. Stuart a pious pleasure to feel that she was not afraid to let people know what she thought. She thoroughly believed it did them good.

As her aunt moved on, Amy joined her friends, and in great glee they repeated the conversation.

"Just like her!" commented Amy. "Now if I had to choose a mother out of all the people I know, I would choose Mrs. Loring. You needn't tell me that the Lorings don't understand human nature!"

"Did you know Hope was as mad as fury because she couldn't go to the football game to-day?"

"Yes, and did you know that she calls this tea of hers her 'bench show?'"

"Hope is clever. Do you think she is pretty?"

"I do. She is so original. Watch her now when she meets Mrs. Fitzhugh. Norman Fitzhugh is

quite attentive to Sallie, and Laura Fitzhugh is after Gerald Edwardes-Edwardes. Look at Hope. She's up to something!"

"My daughter Hope, Mrs. Fitzhugh," said Mrs. Loring, adding in a whisper, "Mrs. Grundy Fitzhugh!"

Hope looked at the pompous old lady with sudden dislike, which increased as she bore down upon the young girl. Mrs. Fitzhugh was very large, very florid, and always looked warm.

"Now here comes the Mammon they all worship," thought Hope. "Oh, if I could only make her so furious that she would never ask me to her house, that would end my social career abruptly. She is the Grand Mogul! She's — why, she's the Reason why I am here instead of at the game!"

She controlled herself with an effort as she met the stare of inventory which Mrs. Fitzhugh gave.

"I'm glad to see that your mother has put a stop to your interest in athletics by having your début to-day. She shows great firmness to discountenance football in a girl. You can't control boys."

"Oh, but if women only played football, how magnificently you could play centre, with your size. Weight counts so in the line, you know!"

"Weight!" cried Mrs. Fitzhugh. She gripped her lorgnon convulsively. She was sensitive about

her size. She opened her lips to speak twice, but her wrath choked her.

Mrs. Fitzhugh snapped her lorgnon as she turned back to Mrs. Loring without another word to Hope.

"Mrs. Loring, I must say good afternoon. Your *older* daughter is charming. I hope you will bring her to my ball. As there will be no gymnasium in connection with it, doubtless this young miss will not care to come!"

With this parting thrust, Mrs. Fitzhugh walked away, her bonnet-strings quivering with offended dignity.

As Hope realised that she was not even to be invited to Mrs. Fitzhugh's annual ball, noted for its exclusiveness and stupidity, but the hall-mark of the elect, her high heels made a curious tapping sound on the polished floor, which Ephum would have recognised as a double-shuffle, although the skirt of her gown did not move.

"Hope, what did you say to make her so angry?" asked Mrs. Loring.

Hope gave one look into Sallie's face, and then she realised what she had done. From that one swift glance Hope knew that Sallie cared for Norman Fitzhugh. Perhaps her saucy tongue had brought a lasting pain to her sister's heart, for Mrs. Fitzhugh was noted for being a martinet with her family.

Hope bit her lip and cast vainly about for a remedy. She saw Mrs. Fitzhugh making her way to the door. In a moment Hope had gained her side, and seizing her fat hand, which reluctantly yielded to the young girl's clasp, she said:

"Please, dear Mrs. Fitzhugh, forgive my rudeness just now. It was inexcusable! But my heart is almost broken because I couldn't go to the game, and when you came and seemed to gloat over my disappointment, I forgot and was impertinent. But I'm truly sorry for it."

Mrs. Fitzhugh was amazed. She was unaccustomed to such frankness, as well as to such evident sincerity. Years of demanding polite utterances and of dealing in polite rebuffs had hardened her, but the girl's fresh beauty and truthful voice stirred her to a remembrance of her own youth. She stared at Hope unconsciously.

"Will you forgive me?" murmured the girl.

"With all my heart, my dear," said the woman, with a friendly pressure of Hope's slim fingers. "It is handsome of you to come and apologise."

With this refreshing exhibition of nature in her artificial life, Mrs. Fitzhugh began to understand why the Lorings had made such strides in their social ambitions.

"Those people have been well brought up," she

said to herself. "And the family have originality. I don't know after all that Norman could do better."

But she had set her hopes on her daughter Laura's alliance with the Honourable Gerald Edwardes-Edwardes, and she paused a moment as he and his mother entered, to see if he sought Laura out.

As Hope flew back to her place she caught Sallie's hand in hers, and whispered:

"I made it all right with her for your sake! I apologised to her!"

"You apologised? Did she accept it?" asked Sallie.

"Very nicely. Not that I like her any better, you understand!"

"That was sweet of you, Hope. Now listen! Here comes Lady Edwardes-Edwardes and her son. What a match that would be for you! It won't make any difference to you that the Honourable Gerald was never known to utter ten words on any subject, for you can chatter enough for him and yourself. But talk to him."

"But," said Hope, frantically, - "what shall I say?"

"Oh, anything. But remember, you may be the Honourable Mrs. Gerald if you are careful!"

"If I am careful!" said Hope to herself. "Oh, how sickening this all is! Why doesn't Mason tell me how the game is going?"

Then she heard a confused murmur, as of many Edwardes spoken together, and she said :

“How do you do, Lady Edwardes-Edwardes? How do you do, Mr. Ditto-Ditto?”

The Englishwoman stared at Hope uncomprehendingly for a moment, and looked inquiringly at her son, who, to the general astonishment of all who had previously met him, burst into loud laughter, saying :

“Oh, I say, Mater, isn’t she ripping?”

Hope was beginning to smile at him with genuine friendliness, when Mason handed her a paper. The smile froze on her lips as she hastily unfolded it and read its message. Everybody watched her.

“Oh,” cried Hope, in a rage, crushing the paper in both hands, “Yale has scored a touchdown already! Five to nothing against Princeton!”

The Honourable Gerald’s monocle fell from his eye, and he stepped forward quickly, saying :

“Oh, is that the Yale-Princeton score? May I see?”

Hope thrust the crumpled paper into his hands, saying, excitedly :

“Do you play football?”

“No,” said the Englishman, “cricket, but your game —”

“Hope,” said Mrs. Loring, with a gesture of apology, “here is your Aunt Mary Lou—”

But as Hope paid no attention, Mrs. Van Tassel said, indulgently:

"Let the child alone, sister Libbie, if she is interested. I'll talk to you and Sallie."

"My brother and cousin are both on the team," they heard Hope saying, and they all smiled.

"Is there a Poe on the team this year?" asked Edwardes-Edwardes.

"You just bet there is," cried Hope, entirely forgetting where she was. "And two of our family! I wanted to go to the game so awfully to-day that I cried!"

"So did I," said the Honourable Gerald. "Er — that is, not cried, you know, but wanted to go!"

"Well, why didn't you go?" cried Hope.

"Mother wanted me to come here, so I came."

Hope looked at him scornfully. He was too big and determined looking for her to despise, however.

"What for, I should like to know? An old pink tea to introduce a girl to society! Why couldn't your mother have come by herself? Why did she want you to come?"

"Why, er — to meet — to meet you, I suppose."

"You could have met me at any time. I am only a girl chained by the collar like a dog. I can't go about the way Jermyn and Laflin do. I simply hate being a girl!"

"Are you as keen on sports as all that? I say, can't we go somewhere and talk?"

"Of course we can," said Hope, cordially, walking away from the receiving line with the young man.

"Hope, come back here," said Mrs. Loring. She saw people smiling at Hope's unconscious departure, and she smiled involuntarily. Hope was as irresponsible as a baby.

"Now don't get discouraged!" the Englishman was saying, as they returned. "Some teams think it is bad luck to score first. Yale always plunges at the beginning. I've noticed that often. Princeton is strong on punting, and you've got some good men there, and they say they depend no end on Cedric Hamilton. He is by all odds the best coach they have had for years, I hear, and has done everything for them. Keep up your nerve, and I'll see that your man brings you the bulletins hot off the wires."

Hope bowed mechanically, and offered an unseeing hand to those who were presented to her during this speech. When he turned away, she sighed.

"Well," said Sallie, "I am surprised! I thought he couldn't talk!"

"He isn't exactly tongue-tied, is he?" said Hope. "He's nice! That's what he is! Oh, Aunt Mary Lou, I didn't see you before! Aren't you excited about Laflin? Why didn't you go to the game?"

"I didn't care to see my only son killed, I thank you!" cried Mrs. Van Tassel. "I shall hear of broken arms and legs soon enough, without going out of my way to witness the slaughter."

Hope smiled appreciatively, but at that moment her eye rested upon a little man standing before her who came not quite to her shoulder, and who was lifting his arm for an exaggerated hand-shake. He was, in addition to being small, pale, anæmic, and straw-coloured. He wore a monocle, and he lisped.

"Aw, Miss Hope," drawled Cuthbert Stuart, "awfully jolly to see you again! You got my flowers, I see."

"Yes, thanks," said Hope, with forced brevity.

"Er — I hope you liked them. Pink and white! Sort of innocent and suitable for a bud!"

"I don't care much for roses," said Hope. "I prefer johnny-jump-ups and tiger lilies. There's more action!"

"Er — sorry! Awfully sorry!" murmured Mr. Stuart, struggling with his monocle. "Never heard of er — johnny-jump-ups. But I'll send you some!" As he turned away, writing in his notebook, Hope turned to Sallie, saying between her shut teeth:

"I'd rather be a girl than that sort of a man! Isn't he a fool, Sallie! I'm going to get Jermyn

to quarrel with him so's he can lick him! How *did* he and Stony happen to be brothers?"

At this juncture Hope's face softened to see her father enter. He was followed by four gentlemen, and the footman announced them in as pompous a tone as if he suspected their worth.

"Mr. I. Stonington Stuart! Mr. Egbert Morris! Mr. Saul Robertson! Mr. Seth Owen!"

At the advent of four bankers of such eminence, who seldom put in an appearance even at functions given by their own wives, many persons turned to look at them attentively. But if any wondered why they had come, they would have reminded themselves that Mr. Loring's genial nature made friends of even those with whom he had business relations.

"Oh, Daddy!" cried Hope, as her father approached and pinched her cheek. "What do you think? Yale has scored a touchdown already!"

The four gentlemen paused, amused by her excitement.

"What's that? Explain it to me," said Mr. Stuart. "I am so stupid, I am only interested in yachts."

"Why, the score is five to nothing against Princeton!" cried Hope. "Oh, dear, I wish I were on that team! *I'd* show Yale!"

As they were moved along by the advent of others arriving, Mr. Robertson said:

"Fine girl of yours, Loring!"

"I wish my poor daughter were as well and strong as she is — and as handsome!" sighed Egbert Morris.

I. Stonington Stuart laid his hand on Mr. Loring's shoulder, saying emphatically:

"She's a beauty, Loring!" and to himself he added: "I wish that ass of a son of mine could get her for a wife!"

Mr. Loring coughed in a gratified manner. Then he said:

"Thank you, gentlemen."

A pause; Mr. Loring looked around cautiously. "Er — will you —" he looked at them significantly.

"Well," said Seth Owen, stroking his beard, "well — just a drop!"

"In my study," murmured Mr. Loring, leading the way.

Just as they left the room a man and a young woman entered, and the footman announced:

"Miss Rebecca Leopold! Mr. Jacob Leopold!"

Mrs. Loring and Sallie put up their lorgnons. But Hope left her place and ran forward to meet them, crying:

"Oh, Becky, I am so glad to see you! I want you to meet Mamma and Sallie! How do you do, Mr. Leopold? I've heard Becky speak of you so

often. Mamma, this is Rebecca Leopold, Mme. St. Cloud's niece!"

"Yes, yes, I know," said Mrs. Loring. "I am glad to see you, Miss Leopold. We were so grieved to learn of your aunt's death. She was one of the most superior women I have ever known."

Little Mr. Leopold after his first bow stood aside, with a delighted grin on his face, watching his sister and Hope standing with their arms around each other's waists. He stepped up to them briskly. Hope smiled at him in her friendly way. She did not at once recognise the difference between him and Rebecca. She was so busily occupied recalling school scenes with Rebecca.

"And oh, the way you could dance!" cried Rebecca. "My brother is manager of 'The Oriole,' and I've told him a thousand times that you could dance all around his best professionals."

"Miss Loring," said Mr. Leopold, "if you effer get boor — which Gott forbit! — I voot gif you fife huntert tollars a veek to do dot tomboy dance vot you invented ot school, and it vood not dake fifteen minutes of your dime efery efening!"

"Oh!" cried Hope, naughtily scenting the daring and delicious danger of such an undertaking. "Perhaps I won't wait until I get poor!"

"Eh, Miss Loring!" said Mr. Leopold, eagerly, rubbing his hands. "Voot you gare to gonsitter

my broposition? You need not be known. A ret vig and a douch of vax on your nose to make it longer — joost vor a disguise! — it iss quide peaudiful as it iss! — and your own fadder voot nod know you. Dink of it! Only fifteen minutes efery efening, and fife hunttert tollars a week!”

“Oh, what fun!” cried Hope.

“And it would be so easy for you!” cried Rebecca. “Hope, do consider it! I will come for you with the carriage every evening, and we can say we are going to the theatre — as we shall be. I’ll have my sister-in-law to chaperon us, and you can bring Mammy just for the sake of propriety. We could have as much fun out of it as we used to have at school.”

“More!” cried Hope, “for this would be more dangerous.”

“Oh, what nerve you’ve got, Hope!” said Rebecca, enthusiastically.

“Fife hunttert tollars, Miss Loring,” said Mr. Leopold. “Remember!”

“Nonsense!” cried Hope, laughing. “That is too much! I wouldn’t think of it!”

“But, Hope,” said Rebecca, giving her brother a look to keep him quiet, “never mind about the money! Think of the dance, and say you’ll do it.”

“I’ll see about it!”

“No, promise now! Please do!”

"All right," said Hope, recklessly. "I'll try it."

"Vill you pegin Monday night?" asked Mr. Leopold, breathlessly.

"I don't care when I begin," said Hope, laughing. "It takes me back to the days when the delight of my life was to masquerade and gain admittance to Mme. St. Cloud and Mme. de Rambouillet in order to prove to them that I could act. I'll call myself Amelia Love. Nobody will ever suspect me of the silliness of that name!"

"Come along, my tear," said Mr. Leopold, taking Rebecca's arm, as Hope turned to her place again, "ve must pegin to adferdise dis minute!"

At that moment Mason entered with a bulletin of the game. Hope seized it with trembling fingers. Ralph Shaw of Yale pressed forward to greet and congratulate her, but Hope took no notice of his outstretched hand. Instead she read aloud:

"Yale 10, Princeton 0!"

"What's that, Hope?" cried Mr. Shaw, utterly forgetting where he was. His face turned red, and he began under his breath the Yale yell.

As the first of the Greek words fell upon Hope's ears, she turned upon the unfortunate man severely:

"How dare you?" she cried, "and at my mother's reception!" Then she wrung her hands, exclaiming with bitterness, "Oh, why in the name of heaven doesn't Jermyn or Laffin do something?"

Oh, the fools, to let Yale win! Why doesn't somebody kick a goal from the field?"

Mr. Shaw saw that she was biting her lips to keep from crying, and the sight so touched him that for the moment he promptly deserted his university and began talking Princeton athletics, as if there were but one team worth mentioning in existence, and that the one graced by her brother and cousin.

After a quarter of an hour's absence Mr. Loring and his four friends reëntered. They had the mellowed aspect of those who have partaken of something very good.

"That is fine stuff you have, Loring, but be careful your boys don't learn where you keep it. I'd hate to have it in *my* house," said Stuart.

"Oh, my boys know where it is, and they are welcome to it to celebrate some special occasion. I use it sparingly myself."

"What! You permit that boy of yours and your nephew to taste whiskey?"

"Why not? They would do it behind my back if I didn't!"

"Then I'd let them. If my boys sin, they must sin behind my back, for neither their mother nor I would countenance it."

"There is adventurous blood in our family," said Mr. Loring, quietly. "The spirit of explorers, sol-

diers, sailors, and even daredevils. I have felt twinges of it myself, and I have seen it in the eyes of my children. I want to guard against wrecks — total wrecks. Therefore I make no secret of anything. I have played games of chance with my little girls, and taken my boys to horse-races and taught them to bet for the excitement of it — not to win money. They made a wry face at the taste of a mint julep as soon as they knew what one was. So-called vices have never been forbidden nor made mysteries of; consequently they have no charm for my children. Whenever they wanted to do anything, I always went and did it with them. It is our way."

"It is the worst — well, excuse me, Loring! I didn't mean to criticise you in your own house. But my way is quite the opposite. At home I am the exemplary father. On my yacht — well, you went with me once and you saw the sort of people I had aboard. But that reminds me. I want you to tell me one thing. Own up now. Are you a prude? One of those women — the tall, red-haired one — you remember her, eh, Loring? — said your headache was all put on, and that the reason you kept your cabin for the whole time and missed all the fun, was because you didn't approve of us. Was that true?"

"Well, isn't that rather a leading question, Stuart?" said Mr. Loring, smiling.

Mr. Stuart fixed his cold eyes upon his host with a look which boded no good. The infernal impudence of a man daring to criticise unfavourably, even in his own mind, an act of Ian Stonington Stuart's!

It was gone in an instant, and his usual suave manner took its place.

"You have an unusually artistic place for New York, Loring," he said, glancing around. "It looks as if you might have been your own artist and collector, instead of hiring a representative to be artistic for you, as the rest of us do."

As this was Mr. Loring's hobby, he at once evinced great gratification at Mr. Stuart's words. Mr. Loring was not only the only one of the five men standing there who was born a gentleman, but he was the only one with scholarly and artistic tastes. Yet they held his future in their power, and had made use of this social event to spy out the nakedness of the land. If Mr. Loring suspected this, one could never have discovered it from his courteous bearing.

"Thanks, Stuart," he said, "now you touch me in a vital spot."

"A vital spot, eh?" said Saul Robertson, with a leer fondly meant to be engaging. "I didn't hear you mention copper."

"Copper!" said Mr. Loring, contemptuously. "That is only recreation! Booming copper is only to earn the wherewithal to indulge tastes like these." He waved his hand at his cabinets of curios. There were enamels, fans, cameos, uncut stones, crystals, and porcelains worth a fortune. "Now here," he said, turning to the wall, "is a rug which you, Stuart, will particularly appreciate."

As Stuart followed to help lift it down, the other three men stepped together instinctively.

"He is a magnificent actor," said Morris, "or else perfectly safe."

"He has strained his credit to the utmost," asserted Saul Robertson, positively. "I confess to desperate uneasiness."

"Has Stuart lent him anything?"

"Not a sou marqué! He told me Loring had not even approached him in the matter."

"Well, we are too deeply involved to take any more risks."

"Gentlemen," said Robertson, abruptly, "meet me to-morrow in my private office. I, for one, am for asking Loring to settle up at once, regardless of consequences. He won't fail. You don't realise how resourceful the man is. He'll get the money somehow."

"Now here is a rug," said Mr. Loring, continuing as calmly as if he had seen nothing of the hurried

conference, "which has a history. My agent in Constantinople got it from a man who had bribed one of the Sultan's eunuchs to steal it from the palace of Yildiz and substitute another. So this rug once adorned the palace of the Sick Man of Europe."

As several guests, attracted by Mr. Loring's explanation of this exquisite rug, had joined the little group of gentlemen and were examining and exclaiming over its fine texture, a commotion behind them caused a general turning of heads. Hope was waving a bulletin of the football game, and crying out in her wild joy:

"Princeton scores! Glory hallelujah! Rushes Yale's line and scores a touchdown on Van Tassel's sixty-yard run! Aunt Mary Lou! Aunt Mary Lou! Laflin has scored a touchdown for Princeton! Your son and my cousin! Oh, I shall die! I shall die of joy! *Now* they're beginning to play!"

"Let me see, Hope!" cried Mrs. Van Tassel, excitedly. "Where are my glasses? Sallie, do you see where they have got to? Thank you!"

Sallie found the dangling glasses, and Hope put the precious paper in her aunt's trembling hands, while she danced up and down, singing, "Princeton can never fail! Yale can't twist Tiger's tail! We are from Old Nassau!"

Mr. Stuart approached the excited girl, saying:

"Your father has a wonderful collection of rugs and *objets d'art*, Miss Hope."

To which Hope made this relevant and lucid answer:

"What do you think Princeton's chances to win are? The second half is nearly over, and the score is ten to six in Yale's favour!"

"I am sure I don't know," said Mr. Stuart, smiling, "but I know that Cedric Hamilton has coached them as he does everything else — heart and soul."

"I know that!" cried Hope, delighted to receive encouragement from any source, "and they say he never loses his nerve. That is a great thing in a crisis of any kind — not to lose your nerve!"

"That is a sentiment which would delight your father," said Mr. Stuart, laughing. "You are a chip off the old block, my dear!"

"Thank you," said Hope. "I am glad you think I am like him. If Princeton were to do something brilliant, we might win after all."

"Is your father a football enthusiast also?" asked Mr. Stuart.

"Isn't he just? My father is everything that he should be, and nothing that he oughtn't to be. That's my opinion of my father!"

"Your father shows his good taste to have such a friend in you. He is a wonderful man!" "Very

wonderful," he added to himself. "He made me lose a cool million once, and I shall neither forgive nor forget it until I have squeezed him to the same tune!"

"I am glad you think so," said Hope. "He cares so much for his friends. He loves to entertain and have people here. That is one reason why he wanted me presented so young."

"He probably thinks a house cannot have too many attractions. And he is quite right. Is my son here to-day?"

"Which one? Stony?"

"Stony!" exclaimed Mr. Stuart. "No, he is not here to-day. I happen to know that, unless he has disobeyed me and borrowed money, he hasn't enough to come with."

"Well, why don't you give him some?" said Hope. "I'd do something desperate if you cut off my allowance the way you do his."

"You would do something desperate!" laughed Mr. Stuart. "I can't believe it. Where is Cuthbert? He, at least, does nothing disgraceful."

"Oh," said Hope, carelessly, "he is around here somewhere. He sent me these flowers."

"Ah," said Mr. Stuart. "I hope you like them. I hope you will allow him to send you all the flowers you want."

"I gave him a list of those I like," said Hope,

demurely, "and he wrote the names down in his note-book."

"Ah," said Mr. Stuart, rubbing his hands, "that's good! It would please me very much if my old friend Loring and myself could be united by a stronger tie than friendship. Hey, puss?"

Now Hope particularly objected to a word like "puss" being applied to her. But, as she bit her lip to keep back a retort of any kind, Cuthbert Stuart strolled over and stood beside her for a moment, and the eyes of the tall young girl were lifted to the father's face as if to challenge him to repeat his words in the face of such disparity. Mr. Stuart recognised it in an instant and turned on his heel, blushing with chagrin.

But Hope had little time to waste over anything of that sort just then. Her eyes were fixed on the door, but when Mason entered, with what must prove the decisive bulletin, Hope dared not take one step forward to meet him. She took it with trembling fingers, then sank back against the wall, covering her face in her hands and shaking from head to foot.

In silence the Englishman picked up the paper from the floor where Hope had dropped it, and said:

"All lost! Yale still 10, Princeton 6, and only two minutes to play!"

Hope's attitude was one of such complete despair

that a group of people gathered around to try to comfort her, and even those who had no sons or brothers — those who did not know whether football was played on a chess-board or with dice — were moved by common humanity to sympathise with Hope Loring. Her face was pale and wan and her eyes swam in tears which could not be kept back.

Sallie and her mother exchanged uncomfortable glances. They could not flatter themselves that their effort to introduce Hope into society had met with any astonishing degree of success. Instead, the main topic of conversation had been the absent football game, and to their surprise, an air of pleasure in the innovation and of subdued delight in the unconventionality of the atmosphere Hope was creating for herself, pervaded the guests, who had lingered from hour to hour instead of their customary tour of drawing-rooms and getting on to the next house as fast as possible. It was at least unusual to see so primitive a display of emotion on any subject. They were accustomed to observe a rigid self-control even over the invasion of death itself.

But even as they clustered around Hope to offer their sympathy, which she refused to accept in the face of so appalling a calamity as the one which had overwhelmed her, a great noise was heard without, a tumult of cries and shouts of victory coming

nearer and nearer. At the first sound of it, Hope leaned toward it, and they all held their breath to listen. Suddenly came the sharp staccato of the Princeton yell, and as the door burst open, a crowd of struggling, shouting, crazed humanity swept in, begrimed, red in the face, but shriekingly triumphant, bearing Laflin and Jermyn and Cedric Hamilton on their shoulders — a study in mud and moleskin.

In a moment the white and gold drawing-rooms became the football field. Questions and answers were shouted back and forth, as if news of a battle had arrived in war-time.

“Princeton won in the last thirty seconds!”

“Poe kicked a goal from the field!”

“They nearly mobbed him! You should have been there!”

“You know Hamilton had coached him for just such an opportunity, and —”

“If you could have seen it! In one second every seat emptied itself into the field!”

“And Hamilton grabbed Poe and kissed him, and then —”

“Then six of them got him and ran him from the field for fear he’d be killed, and —”

“And Poe was the coolest man on the place! He just —”

“ Oh, I say, if you'd been there and seen Laflin make that run — ”

“ And Jermyn — ”

At this juncture, Hope, who had been listening with straining hands, open lips, and dancing eyes, could bear the exuberance of her delight no longer, but flung herself headlong into her brother's arms, regardless of her white gown and screaming with joy. As she released herself, covered with the soft mud of Manhattan Field, the guests forgot all reserve and laughed until they almost became hysterical. The excitement was contagious. The four bankers shook hands with each other enthusiastically, although none of them were Princeton men, nor college men of any sort, for that matter. The women were even more demonstrative and uncontrolled than the men.

“ Let's give three cheers for Princeton! ” cried Miss Cox, excitedly.

“ Now a railroad for Poe, ” cried Hope, when the first had ceased, and Mrs. Loring and Sallie had uncovered their ears.

“ Now one for Hamilton, Hope! ” cried Jermyn.

As this subsided, Hope caught sight of Shaw of Yale. He had joined politely in the Princeton cheers, but his face showed his depression. Hope sprang forward and seized his hand.

“ Yale made a grand fight! ” she cried.

Shaw's face flushed with gratitude.

Then Hope snatched Shaw's football of violets from Sallie's hands, and with its blue streamers flying, she waved it over her head, crying:

"Let's cheer for Yale!"

Instantly they were given with a will, and then the excitement subsided as marvellously as it had begun. The football men disappeared, and the guests began to take their leave of a hostess who was too bewildered by the course of events to know whether early guests were departing or fresh arrivals greeting her.

In half an hour the rooms were empty, and three exhausted women sank into the nearest chairs to rest and talk it over.

CHAPTER X.

ON the Friday following the great game on Manhattan Field, that famous game destined to be discussed by generations of football men yet unborn, and played over from every youngster with his first pigskin to veterans with broken noses from many a game, Jermyn Loring was perplexed beyond all reason by a letter from his father enclosing one of Jermyn's own cheques for six hundred dollars, signed apparently with his own hand. The letter said that the bank had notified him that his son's account was overdrawn, and he had of course at once made it good. But he enclosed Jermyn's last cheque, and asked why it was so large, and begged him to be a little more careful. The reason for Jermyn's perplexity was that he had never drawn such a cheque, and his signature was plainly a forgery.

This discovery was so horrifying that the boy wanted to get away by himself to think it over. His hands shook with nervousness, and being out of training, he was permitted the solace of his pipe.

He plunged his clenched fists into his pockets, bit into his pipe-stem, and started out for a ten-mile walk. He wanted to be alone. Who could have done it? His mind flew to the two suspicious circumstances within his knowledge: Stony Stuart's wonderful knack with a pen, and his awful and mortifying need of money. Still, could he, that nice chap, that agreeable, good fellow — the kindest-hearted old man in the world — oh, hang it! it couldn't be Stony, you know! It just couldn't.

As he plunged along, hardly looking where he was going, and not caring, he met Nuckols wrapped in a blanket and loping along, exercising.

"What are you doing? Banting for your figure?" asked Loring.

"I'm through now. It's a beastly nuisance, but I'd be fat in two weeks if I didn't do this."

"Shucks! It's the beer. Cut it down to half and you'll be all right."

"Cut down my beer?" asked Nuckols, in alarm. "Not on your life. This is a blamed sight easier. I just put on four sweaters and this blanket, and do ten miles, and I'm fit as a fiddle!"

Loring laughed.

"Brass, you're a humourist — without knowing it."

"I saw Amy Whiting get off the train just now with my mother chaperoning quite a little crowd of

girls," said Jermyn, innocently. "Of course you won't mind their seeing you like this."

Without a word of reply Nuckols leaped a ditch and disappeared in the woods. His gray blanket was rapidly being lost to view when Jermyn yelled to him:

"Come on back, you perennial, everblooming idiot! I was only fooling."

Nuckols sneaked back with a face full of suspicion. He shook his doubled fists in Loring's face:

"The left means six months' sickness, and the right sudden death," he said.

"I wasn't sure that you really had a case with Amy," explained Jermyn, "so I thought I'd find out."

"Well, you found out, didn't you?" jeered Nuckols.

"To my entire satisfaction."

"I say, Loring, get Hope to invite me up sometime when She is to be there, will you?"

"All right. She does things so on impulse that you'd better sleep in your glad rags, because it's more than likely she'll telegraph you."

"Honest? Oh, I say, Loring, that sister of yours is a daisy!"

"She hasn't done it yet, remember," cautioned Jermyn.

"Yes, but she will. I know her," said Nuckols,

with placid confidence. "Say, did you hear the result of Stuart's monthly account?"

"No, what?"

"Well, his old man allowed most of the charitable items, just as Stony said he would, but held 'em up until next month. Told Stony that if he felt obliged to explain he must tell that for the disgrace of getting drunk his father was punishing him by withholding his allowance. Did you ever hear of such cant!"

"Never! What did Stony do?"

"Do! He borrowed some money somewhere and went away for three days. He'll get expelled if he doesn't look out."

"Can't say that I blame him much," observed Loring.

"Nor I. But here's a joke. The old man said nothing about all the clothes items, but he kicked on the sixty-dollar bath-robe, and told Stony to send it up to him. Of course Stony didn't have one, so he borrowed Lord's and sent that!"

"Bully for Lord!" said Loring, with a grin.

"Good old days, these," said Nuckols, as they sauntered along together toward town. "We'll often look back on them and think that when we die we can't go to a better place than Princeton."

"Hello, Loring!" cried a voice from across the

street which made the lad jump. It was the teller of his bank.

“Did you get your money all right?”

“What money?” asked Jermyn, a cold sweat breaking out over his body.

“That money I sent you by Stuart. It was after banking hours, but he came tearing down, saying that you had to have it, so I let you overdraw and sent it.”

“Oh, that six hundred, you mean!” said Loring, waving his arm. “Oh, that was all right. Much obliged. The gov’nor wrote to-day that he had made it good.”

“Sure! I knew he would. Then you got it in time, did you?”

“You saved my life!” called Jermyn, moving on, as if unwilling to prolong the conversation. He relighted his pipe with trembling fingers. Nuckols looked at him curiously.

“That pipe would draw better if you filled it,” he observed. “You’ve got it upside down!”

Loring started as if from a dream, and thrust the pipe into his pocket.

“Are you in any trouble, old chap?” asked Nuckols, laying his arm across Loring’s shoulders.

“No, not a bit.”

“Because you know you could count on me to the last gasp, if you were.”

"Thanks, old man, but I was just thinking, that's all. I think so seldom it's no wonder you couldn't recognise it from a fit of sickness. So long!"

Nuckols laughed and turned into Stony Stuart's room.

"Where's Cuth?" asked Nuckols.

"I don't know. Want him?"

"No, I want you. I want to tell you something. I believe Loring is in trouble. Do you know anything about it?"

"Who? I? Why should I?"

"Oh, nothing, only I know you drew out that money for him, and six hun— Leggo! Leggo!"

Both men rolled on the floor, Stuart's hands viciously closing around Nuckols's throat. Nuckols, finding that Stuart was not in fun, as he had at first supposed, reached up with the blow which had gained him his sobriquet of "Brass," and Stuart loosened his grip.

"Now what the devil," said Nuckols, when he could speak, "do you mean?"

"Well, what do you mean by coming into my room and accusing me of stealing Loring's six hundred dollars!"

"You half-baked-on-one-side-and-dough-on-the-other old fool! I never *thought* of such a thing! I knew you just did it to accommodate Loring! He said so!"

"Who said so?"

"Loring."

"When?"

"Just now. He and I were coming along Nassau Street, and McFarland, the teller, called across to ask if Loring got the money you drew out for him all right, and Loring thanked him and said he did."

"Loring tha—"

"Now look here, Stony. I know there is something up, for you've bitten that pipe in two, and Loring tried to light his upside down. I won't meddle, and I won't peach, and I'm here to prove an alibi in case either of you want it. Now I'll take myself off, but you know where to find me."

He wrung Stuart's hand, seized his blanket, and departed, with a heavy frown on his usually placid face.

As the door closed, Stuart fell forward on the table before him, and great sobs shook his big frame.

Presently he got up, pulled his cap down over his eyes, and stumbled over to see Loring. Van Tassel and Jermyn both looked up as he kicked the door open.

"Get out, will you, Van? I want to say something private to Loring. Take your truck over into my room. Nobody's there."

Without a word Van Tassel obeyed. Neither

said anything as the door slammed behind him. Jermyn and Stony sat and stared at each other in silence. Finally Stuart got up, dug his hands into his pockets, and strode to the window.

"The only trouble is, I don't know where to begin, Loring. I am not here to conceal anything, nor to extenuate, nor to whine, but it seems to me, now that I've taken the plunge and gone over the rapids and actually *done* a blackguardly thing, that the fate has been hanging over me ever since I was born. I've so often been tempted to do it. Now I've done it!"

"Take it easy! Take it easy!" said Loring.

"I might if it were only a question of restoring the money to you and telling you that I'd signed your name, but it's worse than that. It will all come out together. The fact is — I'm married, and the Faculty have discovered it and asked me to explain — or rather they have asked me to explain a suspicious set of circumstances with a nice girl, and thank God it can be explained, because I am married to her!"

"I say so, too!" said Loring, emphatically. "Who's the girl? Not —?"

"I know you've guessed it. Rebecca Leopold! We have been married three months."

"Does Hope know?"

"No, Rebecca begged to tell her, but I wouldn't let her. I knew it would mean ruin soon enough."

"How ruin? Of course you'll have to leave college, but that isn't the end of everything, is it? And with such a girl for a wife?"

"It wouldn't with some fathers, but with mine, — he has threatened to disinherit me, and he'll do it, never fear! I was reckless — mad — insane — but —"

"Wait a moment, Stony! You are not yourself now. Have you had anything to drink?"

"Not a drop. I haven't slept for two nights. I guess that's what's the matter."

"Then come with me. We've just got time to catch the 5.30."

"Where to?"

"New York. I want you to tell everything to my father. You're in too deep trouble for me to pull you out, or I'd do it. But he will if anybody on earth can."

"Why, I wouldn't dare," cried Stuart, holding back. "Would you go to him with such a hellish mess as this — foolishness, recklessness, disgrace?"

"In a minute. He can understand better than I can — better even than you can — why you did it. He won't preach, or lecture, or tell you where you missed the road. He'll just put all his strength under you and lift."

Tears came unbidden to the big fellow's eyes at these — the first kind, indulgent words he had ever had spoken to him when in trouble. He gulped hard in his effort not to make a fool of himself.

"And you," he said, gripping Loring's arm as he hurried him toward the door, "you haven't once mentioned my — my taking your money!"

"I've lent it to you before, and I'll do it again. Come ahead, you duffer, or we'll miss the train!"

The Loring's were just sitting down to dinner when Jermyn and Stuart presented themselves at eight o'clock, and were excused from dressing. The family suspected, however, from the boys' anxious faces, that something was wrong, but they carried it off without a question or a lifted eyebrow of curiosity.

"Suppose we have our coffee sent to our rooms, girls," suggested Mrs. Loring, tactfully.

"And can't we have ours in the library?" asked Jermyn, eagerly.

Hope's face fell. She felt defrauded if her brother spent one moment away from her when he was in the house. She used even to hang around his room when he was dressing until he got to a point where he was obliged to say: "Now, Hope, if you don't leave the room, I've got to!" when she reluctantly consented to stay outside his door until he could call her in again.

She watched them with such wistful eyes that Jermyn stooped and rumbled her hair as he went by.

"I'll wait up for you," she whispered, "and have something in the chafing-dish in the gymnasium at eleven if you'll come!"

"I will if I can, but —"

"You must!" cried Hope. "I'll ask Amy and Rebecca and — oh, what, Jermyn?"

For Jermyn had pulled out his watch with dancing eyes.

"Tell you what, Hope! Call up Laflin and Nuckols by long distance, and have 'em catch the next train. They'll get here by twelve. I'll bring Stony back, and you get some girls —"

"Trust me!" cried Hope. "I've got to go out, but I'll make all the arrangements. I'll ask — or Jermyn, won't you ask — er — Mr. Hamilton?"

"Hamilton! Do you think he'd come?"

"I'm almost sure he would," said Hope, smiling.

"All right. I'll tend to it," he said, hurrying after his father.

When they were alone, Stuart felt all his old fear of "a talk with the gov'nor" return, but Mr. Loring lighted a cigar, and leaned back in his chair with his coffee-cup in his hand, and such an air of comfort and quiet and confidence was in his manner that when he said, "And now, boys, what can I do

for you?" Stuart was quite ready to throw himself on Mr. Loring's mercy and tell everything.

"It seems impossible," he burst out, after a short struggle with himself, "that you should care about me!"

Mr. Loring smiled.

"In the South, where we come from, people do care. And they go to each other in their troubles, and the confidence of friend in friend is very beautiful and makes life seem more worth living."

"I can't understand it, for not only do none of my father's friends care about me, but none of my relatives do, either. I wouldn't think of going to any of my uncles with the mess I've got to tell you."

"It is a pity," said Mr. Loring, simply, "but if you will accept me in their stead, I can only say that your confidence will be respected, and I'll deal by you as I would with my son or my nephew."

Stuart looked down.

"You tell him, Jermyn," he said.

"How can I, when I don't know it myself?"

"That's so! Well," said the lad, squaring himself for the ordeal, "as you know my father and mother pretty well, it won't surprise you much to know that I've always been very unhappy at home. Shall I begin at the beginning and tell everything?"

"Yes, do. I can understand better."

"I don't know why, but they tell me that I have

an unfortunate disposition. I am always at odds with them. I hate everything they do, and I have no sympathy with them. Naturally they have none with me. I never was allowed to do things that boys like, and naturally I did them on the sly. One thing my father has always done. I have always had an allowance, but he fines it away from me, until some months I don't have a cent. When I was a little chap I used to think I was only getting even with him when I went through his pockets every chance I got and took what I thought he wouldn't miss. Cuthbert and I always hooked our Sunday-school money, and the druggist and grocer felt so sorry for us they used to charge extra for things, and give us an occasional quarter or half-dollar. I remember it used to be a favourite Sunday afternoon amusement of my father's, after he had paid me my allowance of a dollar Saturday night, to begin with a five-cent fine for catching me reading a novel, or Amy sewing on Sunday, and when I was impertinent to him to fine me again. Of course it was wrong of me, but the injustice of it — the damnable meanness of a grown man pitting himself against a little boy and girl — used to make me so wild that I would say things until — five cents at a time — he would fine away my whole dollar.

“Then he used to say, ‘Now see what your wicked tongue has brought you to,’ and go away

jingling my dollar in his pocket. Then Amy always gave me half, and sometimes all of hers, till I could steal some from mother's purse or the missionary box.

"One day mother came home from church, and found ink-marks on Amy's white apron, fine criss-cross squares, evidently made with a pen. Amy admitted having written a letter, but denied marking her apron. Mother thought she was lying, and whipped her. Amy still denied it, and she whipped her again. She whipped her at intervals all day long, and still Amy denied it. I got two weeks' allowance fined away from me and two lickings from my father for kicking the door and trying to bite my mother's hand for whipping Amy. To this day Amy swears that she doesn't remember marking her apron. Mother finally came to believe that she was telling the truth and perhaps did it absent-mindedly. She has done so many things like it since. Well, Amy and I both demanded that mother should apologise to Amy for her all-day whipping. Amy told me that if mother would do it and really admit handsomely that she had been wrong, she would forgive her freely. But do you think mother would do it? Not on your life! She said, under the same circumstances she would do the same thing again. She said she abhorred a lie, and punished Amy as a duty. Since then Amy has lied about everything. She used to

be the bravest little thing and stick to the truth like a bulldog, but when mother refused to apologise it seemed to turn her into a little devil. And after that we three stuck together always against father and mother.

“Father still keeps up that system of fines. It’s so mortifying and degrading — you can’t think how it makes me feel, for, of course, I have expensive tastes. I am sent to schools where other boys have money. They know my father is a man of wealth, and naturally I owe everybody. I not only owe all my tradespeople, but I owe all my friends. I owe money now that I borrowed when I was twelve years old! The other day I wanted some — had to have it. Nobody could lend it to me — Jermyn was away, and — I — I — well, I did what I’ve been tempted to do a thousand times! I committed a crime to get money! I signed his name to a cheque!”

The boy sat there with quivering lips and shining eyes, twisting and biting his handkerchief to rags. He expected an explosion of wrath and horror. But Mr. Loring simply went on smoking, and Stuart noticed gratefully that he neither exchanged a glance of condemnation nor understanding with Jermyn.

“Have you nothing to say?” cried Stuart.

“Is not your father rather prominent in the

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children?" said Mr. Loring.

"He was one of the organisers," said Stony, with a twisted grin.

"Go on, old chap!" said Jermyn. "I'm only surprised that you didn't do it sooner. I would, I'll bet!"

"But even if you could find an excuse for that, — which I don't!" went on Stuart, — "I know you will find none for what must follow. I married a girl three months ago, and the Faculty have found it out!"

"Who is the girl?" asked Mr. Loring — just as Jermyn had done.

"Rebecca Leopold!"

"Does your father know?"

"I went to tell him that we were engaged, and he — well, he — he knocked me down, and said if I married her I should never have a cent of his money. So — I suppose you will think me very undutiful and reckless — but we were married the next day."

Stuart braced himself as if expecting a blow.

"On the contrary," said Mr. Loring, slowly, "I think you did just what your father might have expected you to do. I am convinced Jermyn would have done the same. I am equally convinced that *I* should. Your wife," pursued Mr. Loring, — Stuart straightened himself, and cast a look of

almost passionate gratitude at Mr. Loring for the dignity with which he found himself invested for the first time, — “is an admirable young woman, of the best blood in the South on her mother’s side, most carefully reared, and a friend from childhood of my daughter, Hope. What, may I ask, did your father want more?”

“He was ambitious for me — so ambitious — you can’t imagine. I don’t know why. I should be wretched with the kind of a society woman he wanted me to marry — perfectly wretched! He wanted me to marry that cold-blooded Fitzhugh girl. He said it would be an alliance worthy of the name of Stuart. And he wants Cuthbert to marry your Hope! Did you ever hear of such infernal impudence!”

Both Mr. Loring and Jermyn smiled at this ingenuous outburst. But they said nothing.

“I’m a pretty easy-going sort of a chap,” Stony went on. “I don’t ask much. I want to be let alone if people can’t understand me. I hate to be nagged and expected to profess things I don’t believe.”

“You want sympathy, Ian, as much as any lad I know. That’s why you have married. That little girl has given you what your father and mother denied you, and, when you found it, you took it. That’s all.”

Stuart rocked his knee back and forth and winked

hard. Then he got up and looked out of the window. Mr. Loring went on quietly, but taking note of the breadth of those heaving shoulders and the effect of a little kindness on a sore heart.

"It's too bad the Faculty have discovered it — it's your last year, isn't it? But I am afraid I can't do anything there. I'll try, however, if you like."

Stuart shook his head without looking around.

"What would you suggest, son?" said Mr. Loring, turning to Jermyn.

"Well, first, I'd face the music and tell my governor that I was married. That's what I'd do."

"He'd kill me," muttered Stuart. "You don't know him!"

"No, he wouldn't. He'd raise a little Cain, but you could duck if he tried to hit you. You're sort of on to him now, since he has struck you once."

"Once!" flashed Stuart. But he went no further.

"Still, I say, tell him," insisted Jermyn. "It will put you right with him. Then, if I were in your place and I had the little Lawrence girl as hard and fast as you've got Rebecca, I'd resign from college and take a little apartment and be the happiest man on earth."

"That is about what I should suggest," said Mr. Loring. "You will have a hard interview with your father, for he is a dictator, in business as well as in his family, and not only will not brook any

interference, but he avenges himself like an Indian. It may be that since you have defied him, his pride will come to the rescue and he will accept your wife for the sake of appearances. But no matter what he does, remember this : I stand back of you, I recognise your marriage, and I will receive your wife. Your wrong-doing, in my opinion, lies at other doors primarily, and *I believe in you.*"

Stuart turned about impulsively, and as Mr. Loring held out his hand, he wrung it fiercely in both his own. Then, impelled by an emotion of which he was instantly ashamed, he threw his arms around Mr. Loring's neck, and bolted out of the door.

"Stay by him, and bring him back here to-night," called Mr. Loring, as Jermyn started after his friend. He turned back for one moment to say, half admiringly, half apologetically :

"Stony didn't make out his case half as strong as it really is. That father and mother of his — if you knew what I do — "

"I know enough," said Mr. Loring, with a sigh. "Narrower and more self-satisfied bigots never existed. If Stony had gone to jail or committed suicide in his disgrace, I should have been tempted to tell them the truth about themselves, and let them for once get an outsider's point of view, — especially his mother."

"It would have done no good," said Jermyn.

“It never does any good to assail the Christianity or the vanity of a woman.”

“Or both, as in this case,” said Jermyn, with a grin.

CHAPTER XI.

HOPE understood the art of rendering obedience to her mandates delightful. She determined to reward both Jermyn and Stony, and while they were in the library, she consulted Mammy and flew to the telephone, where, after a trying half-hour, she secured Laflin and Nuckols from Princeton, and Norman Fitzhugh. She promised to send the carriage for Amy and Gladys and Genevieve at eleven. Sallie and her mother had gone to an auction of paintings, whither Mr. Loring had intended to accompany them, but would be home early.

When Hope heard the door slam after the boys' hasty departure, she rushed down just in time to see her father being helped into his coat by Mason.

"Oh, are you all going out?" she wailed.

"Get your things on and come with me, if you don't want to be left. I'll wait for you."

"I can't. I'm going out with the Leopolds for a little while, and afterward I have got up a surprise-party for the boys in the gymnasium. I've sent for Amy Whiting and Genevieve Lawrence, and when Sallie comes in she will find Norman Fitzhugh curled up on a rug waiting for her."

"Don't make fun of young Fitzhugh, Hope. He is a manly fellow, and I like him. Will you bring Rebecca back with you?"

"Yes, to surprise Stony. You know there's an awful case there."

"Does she seem to care for him?"

"Idolises him. You never saw anything like it. And he — well! they are as bad as Fanshaw Nuckols and Amy. Where are you going?"

"To call on some men who have influence, in case they care to exercise it. I'll be back soon."

"Come up into the gym! Mammy's getting up a little supper. Will you?"

"All right. Kiss me now, darling, and let me go!"

"I know where he is going! Two or three of the Princeton Faculty are dining in town to-night. Jermyn told me! I'll bet those boys are in trouble!" she said to herself, as she made her way up-stairs.

The gymnasium was the most attractive room in the house. It was on the fifth floor and ran the length of it. The mansard roof gave it a low ceiling and slanting walls, which only added to its distinctiveness. The beams were unfinished, and their roughness contributed a Bohemian aspect very dear to Hope and the boys. The floor was of hard wood, and jollier little dances took place up there than in the majestic ballroom with its gorgeous decora-

tions, priceless painted walls, and illumined ceiling. The billiard-table occupied one end. Exercising weights and swinging rings, on which Hope was particularly graceful, were distributed over the walls, while horizontal bars, a punching-bag, dumb-bells, foils, and boxing-gloves were evidence of the versatility of its young owners in their chosen field.

Hope little dreamed, as she arranged this impromptu affair, of the effect it would have upon the lives of four of them. For once her dance at the Oriole was a bore. She hurried through it, with Rebecca lending her every assistance in her power, for Hope had guilelessly told her that Stony was in town, and that she was to see him that very night. The little bride fairly stopped breathing when she heard it, but, although tempted almost beyond resistance to confide in Hope, she loyally kept her promise to her young husband.

Every one was still out when they arrived at the Lorings'. Mammy at once set to work about the supper, and Rebecca, controlling her excitement as best she could, took a cue and played a solitary game of billiards with herself, with her eye on the door and her heart in her throat.

Norman Fitzhugh was the first to arrive. Hope was flying around, a vision in a white gown of some diaphanous stuff, cut low in the neck, arranging the last touches, when he was ushered in. He

was a very elegant young man, with a monocle, which Hope found hard to forgive. He was supposed to be in love with Sallie, and his mother was supposed to be complaisant. Both families were willing, and affairs were running much too smoothly for the course of true love, according to Hope, but Sallie, with dignity, discouraged much conversation on the subject, as Norman had not as yet proposed for her hand. Sallie was, to tell the truth, making it none too easy for him, as she wished him to be very sure. His father was dead, and the estate as yet undivided, so that Mrs. Fitzhugh had it in her power to make things decidedly unpleasant for the young couple in case her august will were crossed in anything. Take it all in all, Sallie was a wise young woman to hold herself in reserve, for several reasons.

Hope and young Fitzhugh had never got on very well together, having no tastes in common. Hope said Norman was a sissy, and Norman thought Hope was a tomboy. But their distrust of each other came largely from never having cultivated each other's acquaintance, so when Hope, surprised at seeing him in the doorway, cried out: "Hello, Norman!" he was plainly flattered by her cordiality, and held out his hand to her with a warmth he had never shown or felt before.

"You two alone?"

“For the present, yes. I’ve asked in a few others as Jermyn came up quite unexpectedly from Princeton and brought Stony Stuart. Then Sallie and Mamma were not going to be out late, so I thought I’d do — this!”

“It looks awfully jolly, — Hope. May I call you Hope?”

“Unhuh! I don’t mind.”

“It was awfully good of you to ask me to-night.”

“It’s mighty funny that I could get you. I called you up just as a flier. I was afraid you’d have ten or twenty other engagements.”

“I did. If you only knew how many plans I have upset! Mother was quite annoyed.”

Hope was plainly delighted that Mrs. Fitzhugh was annoyed. She quite beamed on Norman for having annoyed her. She began to make herself more agreeable.

“Sallie and Mamma only went down to Morgenbeck’s to bid in a Turner that Sallie is quite daffy over. Father said she could have it for a Christmas present. They took Lady Edwardes-Edwardes and her son. Poor Gerald! He’s got to bid for all three of them.”

“Your sister has excellent taste in art, hasn’t she?”

“She has studied it — really studied, you know. And when Sallie puts her mind on a thing she does

it thoroughly. But she hasn't got a bit of sense about dogs. I don't believe she knows a Boston terrier from a King Charles. Er — you don't mind my saying that Sallie doesn't understand dogs, do you?"

"Oh, no, I don't mind at all. In fact, I rather like it. If I had to choose between the two tastes you mention, I think I should prefer for her to understand art."

"Would you now! That's lucky. I think everybody *ought* to know about dogs, and as much about pictures as they have time for."

Fitzhugh laughed outright.

"But don't you see," he said, "things ought to match. Now you would look stunning in a walking-skirt and a red coat, with a bull pup tugging at his strap and the wind blowing your hair about your face and your little ears. But Sallie — your sister, I mean — ought to be painted in a trailing lace gown and a soft picture hat with a long white plume, and a greyhound at her knee."

"Oh," cried Hope, deeply impressed. "You've made pictures of us — just as we really are, every day! I can see them both! I'll tell that to Sallie!"

Her respect for the young man increased visibly. She endeavoured to be more hospitable.

"I've heard that you fence beautifully. Would you like to try with me?" she said.

Fitzhugh smiled, for he realised that Hope was putting herself out for his entertainment. He began to understand why people liked her. But before they could commence the others arrived, and with the advent of Sallie, whose colour rose delicately at the surprise of finding him there, he was off Hope's hands.

Mr. and Mrs. Loring were perfectly at home with young people. Although they would have hesitated to call her "Aunt Libbie," or to take any of the liberties common to those agreeable spirits who are good comrades of youth, she entered so unaffectedly into their pleasures that she was welcome wherever she showed her graceful girlish figure.

The gymnasium was a pretty sight. There was Mrs. Loring in a blue velvet, and Sallie all in brown, with sable trimmings. Rebecca in a red so dark it was almost black, like the dahlia she wore tucked low in her hair — that beautiful, blue-black hair with its invisible wave, drawn smoothly down in a little knot which showed off her cameo profile. Gladys Cox in light blue — blonde and fluffy. Genevieve Lawrence with her red-brown hair in a combination of yellows and tawny shades, which made her look like a nasturtium, and Hope in white.

They were all there, with Norman Fitzhugh as their solitary cavalier, when Mr. Loring and Stuart and Jermyn came in, followed closely by Laffin and

Fanshaw Nuckols, just off the train, but beaming with delight.

Such a fluttering as there was when the men came in! Such a fluttering as there always is when men come in!

It was not necessary for Stony and Mr. Loring and Rebecca to gather by the distant billiard-table and pretend to knock the balls about, for Sallie and Fitzhugh, and Laflin and Gladys Cox, and Jermyn and Genevieve Lawrence, and Amy and Fanshaw Nuckols were as oblivious to their surroundings as young people often get to be. Mrs. Loring was playing solitaire at a table all set for bridge, leaving Hope the only wistful figure in the room. She watched the door nervously, but when midnight struck and Cedric Hamilton had not come, her mortification overcame her. Norman Fitzhugh had broken half a dozen engagements to have an hour with Sallie, but Hamilton doubtless had one with some girl and couldn't break it, or perhaps he didn't want to — perhaps — oh, there he was!

Among four such rapt couples as those gathered in the Loring gymnasium that night, I am convinced that an explorer or a war hero or a foreign prince could have entered and only have attracted the attention of the hostess. But when Cedric Hamilton, the football hero — the man who — oh, well, what is the use of telling what Hamilton had

achieved? He came in, and everybody looked up and with a common impulse moved toward him. All, that is, except Hope.

What is there about a college athlete that enthalls? Why could not the president of a university, or a man with a full purse, or a man who had invented comfort for millions, enter a room and claim the attention of old and young, grave and gay, wise and foolish? Alas, a football man with a broken nose and a torn lip, and with a piece out of his ear, would draw the plaudits of a modern drawing-room more surely than a live Hermes of Praxiteles — unless they were assured that he lost his arm at football.

To be sure, Cedric Hamilton had other accomplishments besides his record at college and his coaching since. He was known as one of the most promising of the younger men in the Street, and although the junior partner, he had been known to give saving advice in crises of importance. Stonington Stuart sometimes traded through his firm, and once or twice had sent for Hamilton to come to the bank to see him. But this availed him as nothing and less than nothing in the eyes of the young. To them he was the hero of the football field. And over the heads of all of them, who crowded around to shake his hand, his eager eyes sought for Hope,

standing quietly bending a rapier back and forth to try its suppleness.

Then he came over to her, noting during his swift approach how the telltale colour flooded her face and paled again to the delicate paleness of the moonflower.

"Hope," he said, reproachfully, "why are you always the only one who will never come to welcome me?"

"I thought you were not coming," answered Hope.

To Hamilton this answer was not relevant. It would have been to Lord of Princeton, had that little lame Freshman been her lover. *He* was intuitive and *he* would have recognised that to a woman whose nerves have been strained in anxiety about a loved one, it is a physical necessity to punish him for it. It is what makes a mother shake her child after it has been rescued from danger. Lord understood these things. He was that kind. But then, Lord couldn't play football, so there you are.

"I am so glad to see you," he said. "I was afraid to come at all after your tea. I never would have dared, if you hadn't sent for me."

"Sent for you!" cried Hope. "I never dreamed of such a thing. Jermyn asked me to telephone you, and I said I didn't know where to find you and

hadn't time to look you up. So he did it himself."

"Oh," said Hamilton, much crestfallen.

Hope hummed a line from "King Dodo," and walked away from him with elaborate carelessness. She looked back over her shoulder, but he was not following her. He stood looking down and not moving. She turned away to hide a smile. How plainly he showed things! He was like a big boy! She murmured the words of the song a little more distinctly:

"There's honey in my heart, and it's all for you!"

He raised his eyes and met her roguish glance. In an instant he was at her side, with his eager eyes upon her face and his voice hoarse with emotion.

"Oh, Hope, if I might believe — if you will only let me tell you how I —"

"Will you teach me that new fencing trick you got from your little Italian?" she cried, quickly. Her eyes, big and innocent, met his strangely. He faltered out an answer, then turned abruptly, and selected a foil.

He was humiliated, mortified, and bitterly disappointed. He began to believe that he had been misled by his own egotism. He maintained a silence of such persistency and gloom as he fenced with her that she began to exert herself.

"Well, why don't you tell me?" she said. "You

are letting me do just as I please. Why don't you show me how?"

"As if you would accept any advice from me!" he said, bitterly.

"Now you are being unkind to me! I didn't think it was in you to revenge yourself upon a girl!" she cried.

"Forgive me! I don't know what I am saying. My head is in a whirl," he said.

He glanced at her quickly, and fancied he saw a smile quiver at the corners of her mouth. He stopped abruptly.

"I would advise you to change your fencing-master," he said, coolly.

"Why, what is the matter?" she faltered, her face crimsoning at his tone. "Don't I fence well?"

"Not at all. You have been badly taught, I should say."

"Why, I have taken of Signor Taglio. There is no one better!" she flashed out.

"Ah? Then you have proved an indifferent pupil. That is rather odd, too, because —" he paused to light a cigarette.

"Well?" stammered Hope, her eyes wide with amazement.

"Because you do most things so well."

"Why, I thought — I have been told —" faltered the girl. Pride stopped her. She realised how un-

tenable her position was. Under certain conditions she would have suspected that Hamilton was avenging himself, but she remembered that Laflin had told her that Hamilton was as great an authority on fencing as he was on football. In fact, she remembered with sudden shame, that was why she had gone into it more thoroughly. This was a just punishment for her vanity. But his putting up his foil as if it were no use trying to fence with *her*, so stung her that she said, humbly :

“ Well, won’t you show me where I am wrong? ”

It was a new tone in which she spoke. Hamilton had never heard it from her before, and it made his heart leap. It gave him a glimpse of what she might be when she had found her master. He controlled his exhilaration with an effort, and with a politeness which he forced to be somewhat stiff, he began to give her a lesson calculated to reduce her vanity to the lowest ebb. He treated her as if she were a beginner, showed her how to stand, how to poise herself, how to bend her wrist, seized her arm with a conspicuous lack of gentleness and quite a professional severity, and twisted it into position. Hope, in her astonishment, forgot all she ever knew of fencing, and began to feel and to act as if she had never handled a foil before. But she soon recognised his mastery of the art and his power to teach, and with this feeling of his real superiority her heart

experienced its first stirrings of a sincere passion. Hitherto her emotion for Hamilton had been hero-worship and an immature girlish infatuation. His love for her had fed her vanity, and that had led her to coquette with him. But to-night for the first time she began to feel the real man. Her new timidity gained upon her, and his continued silence, except for the briefest instructions, combined with the entire absence of his usual manner, finally terrified her with the fear that she had lost him just when she had learned to appreciate him. She turned so white that he was startled.

"Have you hurt yourself?" he asked, anxiously. She fixed her large eyes upon him with a new expression in their depths.

"Yes," she said, slowly, "I have — hurt myself."

During this conversation the little group around the billiard-table had their heads together, eagerly discussing the result of Stuart's having broken the news of his marriage to his father and mother. Rebecca was breathless with excitement, but her soft eyes were turned continually upon Stony with such a world of tenderness in their dark depths that Mr. Loring felt more and more sure that for Stuart to leave all his present environments and to come permanently under her fearless, truthful, and loving influence, would be the turning-point in the young

man's career, and would more than compensate him in the end for the loss of his degree.

Young Stuart told them briefly of his father's fury. He had cut his son off without a dollar, and refused to assist him in any way. But somehow the knowledge of such a man as Mr. Loring supporting him in his dilemma, and such a little wife waiting for him, made the lad impervious to his father's bitter taunts, caused by thwarted ambition. The boy's happiness was of no moment to his father; otherwise he would have rejoiced in it, and welcomed the woman who bestowed it upon him. Mr. Stuart allowed his own personal dislike of the girl, and his indignation that a chattel of his — his own flesh and blood — had dared rise up and shake off a young lifetime of unhappiness, and seize opportunity as it came, to blind his eyes to the figure he must cut in the eyes of the world. But I. Stonington Stuart felt that he was always in the right, and that whoever disagreed with him was in the wrong, so that ended the matter as far as he was concerned.

"There is only one thing to be done," said Mr. Loring, when young Stuart had finished his narrative, "and that is to get you and Rebecca away from here, away from everybody who knows you, and then announce the marriage."

"Oh, if we only could!" cried Rebecca, realising

for the first time how great a burden the comments of her dear and intimate friends would prove.

"Well, I was asked not long ago," said Mr. Loring, "by an old friend of mine in New Orleans, to recommend a young man to represent his business abroad. The salary will be enough to support you, and if you do well he will advance you. I'll wire your name to him to-night, and you can sail in a week. After you are gone I will send a line to the papers, and before you come home everybody will have forgotten all about it. Shall I do this?"

"Oh, Mr. Loring!" gasped Stuart. "After —"

Mr. Loring gave him a stern look. He had exacted a promise from Stuart that he was never to tell a living soul of the affair of the cheque. He knew that in a moment of weakness caused by Rebecca's sympathy, Stony might tell her, and the whole fabric of her confidence and respect, the whole foundation of their married life, in fact, might be destroyed by it.

"There is only one way to deal with that," he had said, "and that is to bury it and forget it. Never write about it nor talk about it, nor even think of it, for you might mention it in your sleep. Women are curious creatures, and when, as in this case, there is no possible danger of Jermyn or myself betraying you, there is only one thing to do, and that is to set a seal of silence over your youthful

follies which even death cannot break. I trust you and become security for you, and that is enough."

So he gave him a warning glance over Rebecca's head, and Stony understood.

Then Mammy announced supper, and rather reluctantly solitary couples gathered from distant corners, and came together for Hope's little feast.

"That's the beauty of an evening in the gymnasium," said Amy Whiting to Gladys Cox. "You are not made to do things you don't like, but you are given an agreeable man and turned loose to enjoy yourself. That's Hope all over."

As they gathered in a little group, and Mammy and Ephum, who always presided over little affairs of this sort, began serving them, Amy Whiting could not fail to comment bitterly in her own mind on the frankness with which all the young people of the Loring family carried on their innocent courtships under the eyes of Mr. and Mrs. Loring. Sallie and Norman Fitzhugh were almost oblivious to their surroundings. Mr. Loring bantered Jermyn on his inattention to all of his guests except Genevieve Lawrence. He teased Laffin on the sly about Gladys, while Hope and Cedric Hamilton had eyes for no one but each other. Fanshaw Nuckols had just asked Amy to marry him, but her happy consent was weighed down by the knowledge that there must be nearly a year of concealment, for she knew

without asking that Mr. Stuart would never accept as a nephew for his heiress niece a young man whose father, after accumulating a handsome fortune, had had the bad taste to die leaving his son to make his own way in the world.

Stony and Rebecca blushed like two girls when Mr. Loring drank their healths, and whispered a toast to their happy married life.

Then came what was always the prettiest part of all. A big fire of driftwood was lighted in the great fireplace which half filled one end of the gymnasium, and while the green and blue and sulphur flames grew higher, the lights were turned low, and Ephum brought out his old fiddle.

Have you ever heard an old-time negro play before an open fire in the twilight? Have you ever heard his violin wail out the memory of his happiness in his lost Southland?

A silence fell over the merry company. The bright-coloured gowns of the pretty girls, the eyes sparkling with happiness, the rosy dreams of the future which glowed in their hearts, the climbing rainbow flames, the mellow notes of the old violin raised now and then to a merry dance tune, but sinking more often to the wailings for home and country, filled the little group with feelings of the realities of life which they got nowhere else. The artificial was gone. The real was here. Then slowly

the violin crept into a waltz, the only waltz Ephum knew, and one by one the couples — all except poor Laffin, who couldn't dance — rose and glided about in the shadowy room to the familiar strains of "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

This was the time for tender leave-takings and silent pressures of hands which might not be done openly.

Suddenly it stopped. The lights were turned up, and the old life was back again, just where they left it off, just where they must take it up again. It was time to go. Still they lingered, and the Princeton boys drew together. It was a way they had, Cedric Hamilton, and Stuart, and Nuckols, and Laffin, and Jermyn. Then broke forth that most thrillingly sweet of all college songs — that song which makes the Princeton heart beat, the Princeton eyes grow dim, the Princeton throat to quiver with a feeling too sacred to laugh or talk over or describe — just "Old Nassau!"

Hope gripped her hands together; the girls hovered near with their arms around each other's waists. Tears ran down old Ephum's face, and he and Mammy fumbled for each other's black and wrinkled hands. Just "Old Nassau!" But those young voices, and the indescribable, ineffable sweetness of it!

“Tune ev’ry heart and ev’ry voice,
 Bid ev’ry care withdraw;
Let all with one accord rejoice,
 In praise of Old Nassau!
In praise of Old Nassau, my boys,
 Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!
Her sons will give, while they shall live,
 Three cheers for Old Nassau!

“And when these walls in dust are laid,
 With reverence and awe
Another throng shall breath our song,
 In praise of Old Nassau!”

There was little talking after that. They said their good-nights silently. Somehow one doesn't feel much like talking after having heard Princeton men sing “Old Nassau.”

CHAPTER XII.

To Hope's great surprise and indignation she found that she had made herself extremely popular at her *début* tea, and invitations poured in upon her. Sallie coaxed, and her mother persuaded her to go to a few luncheons, dinners, and receptions, but her unhappiness was so genuine, and she was so openly bored, that they soon decided not to force her. So it resolved itself into Hope gathering around her a few of the more adventurous young people, whom she initiated into fencing and boxing, and with whom she took long gallops out to Coolmeath.

But Hope was of a restless nature, and the vapid discourse of girls of her own age irritated her. Her spirits were so high that she craved something worthy of occupying her whole attention. Her thoughtlessness led her into many a predicament which a moment's reflection would have averted, for she was penitent enough when brought to a realisation of what she had done.

For instance, if one thought had intruded itself as to what her family would think of her dancing on a public stage, she would have realised the whole

thing. But all her life, as a child, she had danced on the stage for private audiences of invited guests, had worn fancy costumes, and had masqueraded and acted in school and charity productions, so that the publicity of this new suggestion did not occur to her. She thought of it only as a something with a new and delicious element of danger in it, and she entered into it with as little forethought as she would have exercised in putting her horse at a stiff hedge.

As Mr. Leopold had shrewdly imagined, she created a furore the first night she danced. She put the whole of herself, the whole of Hope Loring, into it, and it was so graceful, so willowy, so daring, so rollicking, yet so refined and controlled, that it appealed to the large and mixed audience from all points of view.

Amelia Love and her Tomboy Dance became the rage in an hour. The papers were full of it. Mr. Leopold gave out to the press apochryphal stories of her childhood, and of how he had chanced upon, and become her Columbus, and Hope read them all, and was delighted with the different ways her face had impressed the newspaper artists. She had had no idea of their versatility with one set of features. She heard herself discussed at dinner-parties from which she excused herself in order to go and dance. She heard her own family wonder over it at the breakfast table, but as the Lorings never went to the

theatre except to see legitimate drama and the best of that, Hope had no fear that her family would come and recognise her. On one occasion Hope was invited, and went to a dinner where the guests were afterward to be taken to the Oriole to see Amelia Love dance. She recognised them all from the stage, and the next day heard them tell her what she had missed, and regretted that she hadn't stayed to go with them. Then Jermyn and Laflin came up from Princeton and wanted to make up a party and go, but Hope wouldn't, so they took Sallie, and they told Hope that it was pretty good, but that she, Hope, could dance all around Amelia Love. Laflin said Hope could beat her in a walk.

It was only a fad and would die out as suddenly as it had sprung up, but for the time being it was all-absorbing. Girls took dancing lessons, and Mr. Leopold was importuned by women wanting to know if Amelia Love would consent to teach her dance to others.

Rebecca and Hope were in a state of ecstasy over all this, but poor Mammy was seething with indignation, and breathed threats at every turn.

On the evening of Mrs. Fitzhugh's famous ball, while dinner was still being served, Cedric Hamilton called at the Lorings. He came in with a worried but determined air, and on being shown into the reception-room, he said to the footman:

"Mason, is Mr. Loring still dining?"

"I believe so, sir. But he will not be long now, sir."

"Mason, tell him to finish his coffee in peace, I am in no hurry."

"Very good, sir!"

"And — er, Mason!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Is Miss Hope in?"

"I couldn't say, sir, but I'll inquire of her maid."

"Do," said Hamilton, handing his coat and hat and stick to the footman, and something else which caused Mason to touch his forelock.

"Anything else, Mr. Hamilton?"

"Nothing, Mason — except to see that Mr. Loring is not inconvenienced."

"The butler is very slow in serving — this evening, sir!" said Mason.

"Thank you!" said Hamilton.

When he had gone Hamilton began pacing the floor with his hands in his pockets.

"If only I can see her alone," he thought. "She is still so much of a child that she will never be serious with me. She does not seem to understand. Yet perhaps — her Southern blood might make her coquettish! I wish I knew!"

When Hope entered she noticed his eager manner

at once, and suspected what it portended. It made her timid.

"Oh, Mr. Hamilton," she said, "you are just in time!"

"I hope I am," he said, earnestly. "I want to be in time — for you, always!"

"Oh, I say!" murmured Hope, in confusion.

"Hope, will you let me tell you something?"

"Yes," said Hope, looking toward the door, "but you must —"

"What must I do?"

"You must — well — hurry a little! The boys are coming!"

"It won't take me long," said Hamilton, eagerly, "and yet it will take me for ever to tell you!"

As Hope looked up at him he forgot his hurry, but stood gazing into her eyes until sounds of laughter were heard at the door.

A gleam of mockery came into Hope's eyes, as she drew her hands from his, saying, maliciously:

"I should think it did!"

Jermyn and Laflin dashed into the room, Jermyn helpless with laughter, Laflin nervous but determined.

"How do you do, Hamilton? Come on, Laflin. Hamilton will help to give you your last lesson in deportment, so the little Cox girl won't think you

are the champion heavyweight. Play for us, Hope!"

As Hope moved toward the piano, she said to Hamilton:

"This is Laflin's first appearance in society. He is going to a ball to-night — Mrs. Fitzhugh's —"

"And aren't you?" said Hamilton, eagerly. As he seldom showed eagerness, his manner was the more pronounced for that reason.

"Not on your life," said Jermyn, answering for her. "Do you think they get Hope to balls? Hope is much too manly for that. She is not a dancing man. She leaves all that sort of thing for Laflin and me. Come on, Laflin, remember I'm the girl. No, hold me tighter than that. I might slip out. But, good heavens, don't hug me like that. Here, do it like this. Now let her go, Hope!"

They took a few steps in each other's embrace, but not together. Laflin was doing his best, and Jermyn was patient.

"Is this a two-step or a waltz?" cried Laflin, with a very earnest but anxious face.

"It's a waltz," said Hope. "Can't you count? One, two, three! Now turn! One, two, three! You play so nicely, Laflin, you ought to be able to count."

"I play by ear, and I never count!" panted Laflin.

"I don't know one note from another. Better give it up, Jermyn!"

"Not at all! Remember how disappointed Gladys looked the other night in the gym when you were the only one who couldn't dance. Let's begin over. Don't back me, you fool! Remember I've got a train on, and I'll trip over it."

"I can't remember what I can't see," said Laflin, desperately. "I wish you could play and let Hope dance with me."

"Can't you play, Mr. Hamilton?" asked Hope. "Laflin plays by ear, but poor old Jermyn can't tell the black keys from the white."

"I'm sorry to say I can't either," said Hamilton. "But if a skirt is all that is needed, why don't you —"

"Just what I was going to suggest," said Hope. "Wait a minute, Jermyn, there's an old one of mine in the hall closet."

She hurried out, and returned in a few moments with a cloth skirt of her own.

"Here, Jermyn. This will do nicely, and you can't hurt it. Put it on. It will be long enough, but what shall we do about the waist? You can't get it around you. Wait! I'll rip off the belt and let out the gathers. Stoop down, silly!"

She flung it over her brother's head, but somehow

in its folds his head remained. Only a smothered voice emerged, saying:

"It's caught. I can't move! Take it off! Here, give it to me," he said, when he came into view. He held it down and stepped into it from the top. "I don't have any trouble with a skirt if I treat it like a pair of breeches. Now pin it, Hope, but don't stick me!"

"Draw in," said Hope, twitching ineffectually at the belt.

"Where?" asked Jermyn.

"Your waist, of course! There! Now you are a beautiful Miss Cox!"

"I wouldn't say that you are exactly in the fashion, however," cried Hamilton. "It comes just below your knees in front."

He glanced helplessly at his watch. Hope saw him, and turned to the piano to hide a curve of the lips.

"Now, let's do the whole thing, Laflin. Give me a fan, and come up and ask me to dance. I'll be talking to Hamilton."

"Miss Cox, may I have the pleasure of this dance?"

"Don't care if I do," said Jermyn, with a simper which would have made the real Miss Cox wild. He spoke in a high falsetto, and as they began to dance, continued: "Beautiful weather we're having!"

Then in a deep bass, he said: "Get off my feet, you mucker! Remember I have on white satin slippers with glass beads on them."

"The table is in the way!" panted Laflin, perspiring freely in his efforts to master all the delicate points.

"Well, steer me away from it," cried Jermyn, savagely. "Don't make me black and blue."

"Won't there be more room in a ballroom?" asked Laflin.

"There is never any room in a ballroom," said Jermyn. "Don't back me, I tell you! And people are worse to dodge than furniture."

"That's very good, Laflin," said Hope, encouragingly from the piano-stool. "You are getting on nicely. Now stop and rest."

"Oh, what a lovely dancer you are, Mr. Van Tassel," said Jermyn, in falsetto. "I could just die waltzing with you." Then in his own voice, he said: "Get me a drink, won't you? I'm throat down to my waist. Take this belt off, Hope. I wouldn't be a girl for a million dollars."

"I wish I might have just one dance with you, Hope," said Hamilton, "as long as you are not going to Mrs. Fitzhugh's to-night."

"Why, you may," said Hope. "Laflin will play for us, won't you, Laflin?"

"You just bet I will, old girl, after all you've done for me — playing your fingers to the bone!"

With that he sat down to the piano, and swung into the most beautiful waltz, picked up, heaven knows where, but in perfect time and tune. As Hope and Hamilton waltzed, Jermyn watched them admiringly, but without a suspicion that, but for his presence, Hamilton, his idol, would be whispering words into Hope's ear which would gratify him above all others, — with possibly the exception of Hope herself. For once Hope was tremblingly happy.

It was Mammy who stopped them, entering with Hope's wraps on her arm.

"Come awn, honey. Mrs. Leopold an' Miss Becky done come foh you to go to de te-a-tre!"

"Are you going to the theatre?" asked Hamilton, eagerly. "Oh, may I go with you?"

"Indeed, you may not," said Hope, in the most frigid tone she had ever used toward him, but fear drove her to use it.

"Take keer, honey," whispered Mammy, "dat you don' tell too much! Yo' Paw sho' would kill me ef he foun' us out!"

"Mamma and Sallie are ready, boys," said Hope. "Don't keep them waiting." She stood still with her wraps on.

"May I see you to your carriage?" he asked.

“No,” said Hope, hesitatingly, “I’d rather not. Go and see Mamma to hers. But,” she added, touched by his despairing face, “come again soon, and,” giving him her hand with a shy blush, “don’t forget what you were going to say!”

CHAPTER XIII.

PERHAPS Hope inherited her histrionic talent and her keen observation from her father, for no sooner were his family gone and the house empty, save for the soft footsteps of the servants who moved to and fro noiselessly, and finally withdrew, than he dropped the mask he habitually wore in the presence of his family, and permitted himself the luxury of total relaxation. Lines of care and anxiety appeared in his face, and he looked around at the bronze busts and the well-filled shelves of his library with a hunted expression. Then, as if unable to sit still, he sprang up and began to pace the floor restlessly.

“Perhaps this is the last night I shall own this place,” he muttered to himself. “I know only too well why Owen and Robertson and Morris are coming here to-night. They want me to pay up. Six millions! They want me to produce six millions of dollars. I anticipated it when I saw them looking around and whispering together last week. Well, it’s all a game! I have squeezed the other boys in my day, and I ought not to howl when

it comes my turn to be squeezed! And I wouldn't if it weren't for the girls. My wife! My sweet, delicately reared Southern flower! How will she bear bitter, grinding poverty, for oh, my God, it means that! If they call on me for that money, it means that the name of John Loring will be wiped out — obliterated. And Sallie! And, oh, Hope! My girl Hope! To take it all away from her! Sallie has had her turn. She has had everything that Europe and America could afford — travel, masters of every sort, all the money she wanted, everything — while poor little Hope has had nothing. I was just getting ready to retire and let Hope help me spend my money!"

He stopped abruptly, and pressed his hands to his throbbing temples.

"I can't even think with one of my awful headaches coming on; yet I must keep a clear head for those bankers. I may outwit them."

The footman entered and announced:

"Mr. Owen! Mr. Robertson! Mr. Morris!"

"Ah, gentlemen, good evening," said Mr. Loring, going forward to meet them, with his usual manner. The footman took their hats and coats, and the butler entered with decanters, and began to open bottles of soda, while Mr. Loring offered them his finest cigars. When the footman had supplied lights for the smokers and been dismissed, the four seated

themselves in the deep-cushioned leather chairs in which the spacious library abounded, with an air of comfort.

“Well, Loring,” said Mr. Owen, “that was a fine entertainment you gave for your daughter. I have never seen one handsomer!”

“Very good of you to say so,” said Mr. Loring. “I want Hope to have the best of everything. That is all I am working for now.”

A glance of some discomfort passed between his guests at this turn of the conversation. It gave them a moment of impatience to realise what their errand might mean to that handsome girl in the event of Mr. Loring's not being able to rally.

“How's copper, Loring?” asked Egbert Morris, abruptly, anxious to come to the point at once.

“Copper?” said Mr. Loring, with an air of polite surprise. “About as usual, I believe. By the way, I think I saw you and your wife at the theatre Monday night. Bernhardt was magnificent in the third act of ‘Phèdre,’ wasn't she?”

“I'm sure I don't know. I don't understand French, and neither does my wife. We leave that for the children.”

“You miss a great deal,” said Mr. Loring, simply.

“Why, do you speak it?” asked the banker, curiously.

“We always use it in the family,” said Mr.

Loring. "Especially when we do not care to have the servants understand us."

"But to return to copper," said Mr. Morris, uneasily.

"Why discuss business in a social call?" said Mr. Loring, quizzically. "Business is trying enough during the day."

"Is your business trying?" asked Mr. Robertson.

"Not more so than usual. I endeavour to forget it when I leave the office. I tried a new pair of horses this afternoon, Owen, that I'd like to have you see. They are blue roans and very handsome."

"I dare say! I dare say!" said Seth Owen, testily. "But I have too little time to spare from my business to know very much about horses. From the bills my boy sends me, I should think he knew something of them."

"Or perhaps it shows how little he knows of them," said Egbert Morris, with a chuckle.

"But to return to business," said Mr. Robertson, facing his host.

"Oh," said Mr. Loring, "it is very good of you not to object to discussing it in a social call, for it enables me to tell you that I expect to be obliged to call on you for a little more money. You have already backed me so heavily in this copper deal that you won't object, I am sure, to one more loan."

There was an ominous silence after this remark. The three bankers cast furtive glances at each other.

"What," said Mr. Loring, "you don't answer me? I don't want much this time, and I'll double the security I gave you for the last."

"How much do you want, Loring?" asked Mr. Morris.

"Oh, let me see! About two millions, I should think. And that would end it. That would carry out all I intend to do. Settle the terms and amounts between you," said Mr. Loring, leaning back and smoking lazily.

"I don't know about that," said Robertson, a little sharply.

"What?" said Mr. Loring, as if surprised. "Don't know about it? Come, now. You can manage it between you."

"Wait a minute, Loring," said Mr. Owen. "The fact is, we think we are in too deep already, and while we have perfect confidence in you, you understand, we think we shall have to ask you to settle up and pay us what you owe."

"Perfect confidence!" repeated Mr. Loring, sternly, sitting up suddenly, and facing his guests with blazing eyes. "Pay what I owe! You mean that you have come here to-night to ruin me! Pay you six millions of dollars at this stage of the game! Well, you know what that means!"

"You could borrow it elsewhere, Loring," said Mr. Morris.

"I don't take you for a fool, Morris, and I'll thank you not to take me for an ass!" said Mr. Loring, fiercely. "Was I born yesterday, do you think?"

"Loring, you yourself know that you are playing a dangerous game," said Saul Robertson.

"So are you in being a banker in New York. So is every man," bitterly, "who is at the mercy of his friends!"

"Now you are unjust," said Robertson. "We are still your friends. And to prove it, we won't ask you for the whole amount. Pay — say half of it. There!"

"When?" said Mr. Loring, gloomily.

"Could you pay it by Thursday?"

"Why not to-night?" said Mr. Loring, with a bitter laugh. "Give me a week!"

"Impossible!"

"Then make it Saturday. Give me until twelve o'clock on Saturday." He watched them keenly. They glanced at each other, and they all acquiesced by a nod.

"Very well," said Seth Owen. "Until twelve o'clock Saturday!"

Mr. Loring bowed in silence, and rang the bell sharply. The footman entered with their coats, and

in silence adjusted them. Mr. Loring stood watching them without speaking. They half turned to shake hands, but from where he stood, Mr. Loring bade them a short good-night, and signed Mason to show them out.

"Turn out some of these lights," said Mr. Loring. "They make my head worse."

The footman turned out all but one, and left the room. Mr. Loring sank into a chair with a groan.

"It's no use," he muttered. "I might as well have let them ruin me to-morrow. I've seen this thing coming for a month and tried to prepare for it, but I exhausted every resource long ago. I kept hoping against hope to pull through—to pull out in some way for the sake of my family. God! My head! It grows worse every day. I must take that bromide or I shall lose my mind! I wish I could lose it!"

He drew a small bottle from his pocket and looked at it.

"Two drops of that means deep sleep for twelve hours! All of it means eternal sleep. I am not in my right mind, or I would not be thinking of that. I've always said it was a coward's death. Suicide! No man ever takes his life for himself alone. It is for his women. My wife! My girls!" He bowed his head upon the table and sobbed aloud.

But the pain in his head caused him to stagger to his feet, his face suffused with red, holding his throbbing temples between his two hands:

"God! This pain!" he cried, wildly.

He took a glass, and with fingers which twitched convulsively he poured out two drops from the little phial of bromide. He looked in the water-bottles, but they were empty. He ground his teeth. Each little untoward accident increased the tumult in his head. There seemed to be an electric storm raging among his nerves. His face had grown haggard and wild during the last five minutes.

He had no sooner left the room to fetch some water when the door opened cautiously, and Hope carefully put her head in. Then finding the coast apparently clear, she entered boldly, followed by Mammy, and flung herself into her father's chair, raising her arms above her head in indolent ease.

"My, wasn't it fun, Mammy! I never got so much applause before. I saw ever so many people I knew. The Stuarts had a box. They were going to the Fitzhugh ball afterward. Oh, how indignant the Grand Mogul would be if she knew the sister of the girl her boy is falling in love with was Amelia Love! Disgusting! So improper! But, oh, what fun, I would answer, and such splendid exercise for the muscles! Then she'd die!"

"Hit's scan'lous! Dat's what hit is," cried

Mammy. "I nebber was so intentioned to go clean back awn you en tell yo' Maw ez I done been en de las' week!"

"Mammy, if you open your mouth again, I'll send you back to New Orleans. I'll sell you back into slavery!"

"Laws, Miss Hope, honey," whimpered the old woman, "you wouldn' do dat, would you?" Then recovering herself, she said: "Whah'd you git yo' slavery?"

"You don't suppose," said Hope, mysteriously, "that all the States freed their slaves, do you, Mammy?"

"No, Miss Hope," said Mammy, with dignity, "suttenly I don'! I reckon I knows what States I'se free in, en what States to keep out ob. I hopes I has some eddication, ef I can't read!"

"Well then, you just keep your mouth closed and quit scolding me, or I'll go alone."

"Lawd, honey!" cried Mammy, in great alarm, and clapping her hand over her mouth as though it would go off without her volition, "I won' say anudder word! You jes' listen en see ef I does!"

"Besides," said Hope, impatiently, as if her own conscience needed a little balm, "don't Becky and Mrs. Leopold call for me in their carriage every night, and don't you dog my footsteps and watch me from the back of the box where you won't be

seen and recognised? Don't I do everything I can to make it proper? It's all right!"

"Suttenly hit's all right! Who sed hit wasn't? En you sho' do get mo' clapping den all de odders put toge'rr. En de way de people pile into de te-a-tre jes' befo' yo' dance! Whoo-ee! Dey sho' does know a good t'ing when dey sees hit, even up hyah in New Yawk!"

"And the newspapers, Mammy! Aren't they funny! 'Miss Amelia Love in her famous Tomboy Dance.' And the posters outside the theatre! Oh," giving herself a hug of rapture, "it is so exciting for fear somebody will find me out. I am in a shiver of fear every evening. But even that is fine!"

"Ain't yo' hongry?" asked Mammy, suddenly.

"You just bet I am!" cried Hope, jumping up. "Let's go and see what there is to eat. Don't make a noise!"

They went out softly by one door just as Mr. Loring came in by another with a glass of fresh water in his hand.

He fumbled in his waistcoat pocket for the little bottle of bromide, and, raising the glass, carefully counted the drops as they fell into the water.

"Daddy, what are you doing?" cried Hope behind him, in so sudden and shrill a tone that the man started nervously, dropping the glass and shivering it. He turned and faced her. She was

bearing a large meat platter, upon which rested the carcass of a turkey. Mammy was just behind her with plates, knives, and forks. Hope gave one searching look into her father's face.

"Did I scare you, poor dear?" she murmured, carelessly, coming up and putting her arms around her father's neck. "Why, how you look! Have you got one of your fearful headaches? You look so worried, Daddy, darling. And you look hungry! I don't believe they give you enough to eat! How would you like some" — she paused, invitingly — "some cold turkey picked off the bones with your fingers — no knives and forks! — and some sandwiches, oh, and some champagne! Do you see the time? And do you know what day this is? It's ten minutes to twelve. In ten minutes it will be my birthday, and I'm going to have you the first to drink my health! Mammy, go get a bottle of champagne!" Hope searched for her father's key-chain, and took the key to the wine-cellar. "This is the key. And mind you frappé it, or I'll pour it all out on the floor."

Mr. Loring smiled faintly, but Hope was quick to see it. She swept all the papers off her father's desk on the carpet, and proceeded to set the table after a fashion. She gently pushed Mr. Loring into the easiest chair, laid a napkin across his knee, and handed him the leg of the turkey. He took it to

please her. Hope perched herself on the edge of the table, and began delicately to strip bits of white meat from the breast of the turkey. Occasionally she salted a morsel and fed it to her father, who submitted gracefully.

"This will cure your headache, Daddy," she said. "Or, if it doesn't, I know something that will — something that is better than all the medicine in the world. I'll smooth your head with my hand! Do you remember how I used to cure you?"

"Yes, I remember, child," said Mr. Loring, faintly. Hope watched him anxiously. He was not to be roused from his abstraction by even her pretty wiles. He sighed often, and rubbed his head with a fretful motion. But Hope persevered. As Mammy entered with the champagne, Hope sprang to meet her.

"Here comes the champagne!" cried Hope, seizing it from the ice-tub and pouring a glass. The clock struck twelve. "It's my birthday. Offer me a toast, Daddy, dear!"

Mr. Loring rose to his feet.

"Here's health and happiness to you, my little girl! May you always possess the former, and always find the latter, whether it comes through me or another. God bless you!"

"That's a sweet, unselfish toast, dearest," she

said, kissing him. "Here's to myself!" she cried, waving her glass and taking a sip of wine.

"Where have you been to-night — you and Mammy?" asked Mr. Loring, brightening a little.

Mammy's jaw dropped, and her eyes rolled in fright.

"We have been to the theatre with the Leopolds," said Hope, serenely. "They have a box the year around."

Mammy moved around cautiously, and manoeuvred to catch Hope's eye. Hope grinned at her maliciously.

"Hit's jes' lake her devilment," muttered Mammy to herself, "to go awn talkin' 'bout dat, tell her Paw catches her. She sho' does love to skate awn thin ice. But I'll git kilt ef we's foun' out!"

"Ah, Mr. Leopold is the manager, I think you said," observed Mr. Loring. "Is it the Oriole?"

"Yes, the Oriole. It's vaudeville, you know."

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Loring. "I was there last night."

Hope was in the act of raising her champagne-glass to her lips when her father said that. She stopped so suddenly that the wine was spilled. She set the glass down, and wiped off her gown with her handkerchief.

"You were there — you?" she said. "I thought

you never went to the theatre except to see Irving or Bernhardt."

"I seldom do. But I have been so restless lately that when the men I dined with last night suggested the Oriole, I thought I would go."

"What time did you get there?" asked Hope, fearfully.

"Oh, they only wanted to see one turn. The Tomboy Dance of this new dancer, Amelia Love. It was very taking, only —"

"Only what?" asked Hope, too much engrossed to see that Mammy had nearly turned white from the strain of this conversation.

"Only she looked so fresh and refined — so unlike all the others, and in some strange way she reminded me so much of you, that I couldn't help feeling sorry for her father. Foolish, wasn't it?"

"For her father? Why?"

"Well, because I think this girl's parents are refined people, and that she only does this for the money. My eye wandered about the house continually, wondering if I could recognise them from their interest in her, which they would not be able to conceal."

Mammy shrank behind the imaginary curtains of an imaginary box at this remark. Hope was silent, and her father continued:

"Did you see her closely? Does she seem refined?"

"Yes," said Hope, reluctantly. "I went behind the scenes with Mrs. Leopold and Becky. She seems a nice girl."

"That is just the way she struck me. As a nice girl. No, Hope, she is too much in earnest and does it too well to be in it for anything but money. And poverty is her excuse. I feel sure of it. Your Daddy is a foolish old man, isn't he?"

"Never!" cried Hope. "You are too good. She isn't worth your interest, probably. She strikes me as a daredevil who has only gone into it for the fun and excitement of the thing, and the danger of being found out."

"Never!" exclaimed Mr. Loring. "No nice girl could be so thoughtless, or so mischievous, or so cruel to her parents, as to exhibit herself on the stage before a vulgar crowd of people who paid to see her as part of a show."

"But," said Hope, eagerly, "she is properly dressed! She does not — there is no —"

"That is not the point. She may even be brought to the door of the theatre in a carriage by her own mother, but," turning to her suddenly, "think how I would feel if it were you!"

"Oh," said Hope, almost tearing the lace at her throat, "would you — feel — disgraced?"

"No, not disgraced. Nothing disgraces but dishonour. But I should be broken-hearted."

As Hope, utterly crushed by the point of view, turned away and hid her face, Mammy, valiant in spite of her terror, came to the rescue of her nursling, and deliberately placing herself between the two, said:

"Marse John, I'se jes' glad to hear what you done said. Me 'n' lill Miss has had a powerful lot ob 'sputes awn de subject, but y'all kin say wot you please! I don' 'prove ob de te-a-tre!"

"Don't you, Mammy? Why not?" asked Mr. Loring, smilingly. He was exceedingly tolerant of his old servants, and permitted them all the privileges they had enjoyed in the South.

"That settles it," muttered Hope to herself, from behind the screen of Mammy's broad back, "that settles the fate of Miss Amelia Love. She dies to-night, and will be buried without any funeral pomp — buried in Oblivion. It is a large cemetery, and contains many a name of persons once distinguished."

"Why don't you approve of the theatre, Mammy?" asked Mr. Loring.

"Dey allows too much freedom. Hit's scan'lous."

"What do you mean, Mammy?" asked Hope, anxiously.

“ I ain’t gwine tell nothin’,” whispered Mammy. “ Why, to-night,” said the old woman, addressing Mr. Loring, “ dey had wot dey calls a ‘ new turn ’ wot comes aftah dis yere dance wot y’all projeckin’ ’bout. Lill Miss was behin’ de scenes wid Mis’ Leopold lake she don’ tole you, en I was lef’ alone in de box. Well, dis yere ‘ new turn ’ was de mos’ dangerous man I ever hearn tell ob bein’ let loose in a decent city. He’s got eyes wot kin see thoo a barn door. Dey call him Prestis-did-he-get-yer — ob all de names foh a mudder to gib to a helpless baby! Well, hit went awn until he done tings which made me creep wid mortification, but nobody seemed to keer, but jes’ me. Dat aujence sho’ was de brazen face. So up I gits and goes foh de stage-door to git lill Miss en come home. At de do’ stood Mistah Funnyman, wot knew me foh Miss Hope’s Mammy, en he says, ‘ Wot you quittin’ so early foh, Auntie? De show ain’t out!’ ‘ Show or no show,’ I sez, ‘ dish ain’t no place foh me. I’s gwine home.’ ‘ Wot’s de mattah,’ he sez. ‘ Young man,’ I sez to him, solemn-lake, ‘ did you see wot dat man wid dem gimlet eyes jus’ done?’ ‘ Yas,’ he sez. ‘ Did you see him read dat newspaper thoo dem folded blankets?’ ‘ Yas,’ he sez. ‘ Den lemme out ob hyah. Dis ain’t no place foh me, me wid a thin caliker gownd awn!’ ”

At this moment a stir at the door was heard,

and presently Mrs. Loring, Sallie, and the boys, having returned early from the dance, came in.

"Oh, here you are," said Mrs. Loring.

"Oh, I'm tired to death," said Sallie, sinking into an easy chair.

"Hope, you were clever not to go," said Jermyn, attacking the remains of the turkey. "It was as dull as dish-water. It always is in her house. For a good dance, give me one of these so-called 'new people' that Mrs. Fitzhugh turns up her nose at. They are at least up-to-date and give you a rattling good time. Mrs. Fitzhugh is about thirty years behind the times."

"For all that," observed Mrs. Loring, "one must be on her visiting list to be anybody in New York."

"Was Genevieve there, Jermyn?" asked Hope.

"You just bet she was. I had seven daisy dances with her. You ought to have seen her mother glare."

"I believe you're sure enough gone on her," said Hope.

"Well, he's gone on a peach, if he is," said Lafin. "She looked ripping to-night."

"What language you use!" said Mrs. Loring, holding up her hands. "Children, do try to be more elegant. If you knew how it breaks me up when you use slang!"

She was astonished when they all laughed.

"Why, mother, we get it from you. Honest we do! 'Breaks me up' is rotten slang! Positively indecent!" said Jermyn.

He bent over and kissed her.

"Well," said Mrs. Loring, "who wouldn't be corrupted with two" — pointing at Laflin and Jermyn — "three," pointing to Hope, "boys in the house, who never by any chance speak English if polyglot slang will answer!"

"Tell me about Laflin and Miss Cox, Jermyn," cried Hope. "Did he do credit to our training?"

"'He done noble!'" said Jermyn. "He only made about four breaks. He chasséed so fast in the lancers that he hugged the wrong girl when it came time to waltz. He was so careless with those feet of his that he stepped up on his partner's instep and slid off a couple of times, and he sat so close to Miss Cox between dances that he forgot to take his feet off her dress when she left him, so she left him most of her dress too. And he got so excited trying not to back his partner that when he breathed it blew the lights out. Otherwise he was a great success and covered the name of Van Tassel with glory and torn party clothes."

"Sallie," said Laflin, "it looks to me as if you had about done up your young man. How well the name will look on a visiting-card — Mrs. Norman de Groot Fitzhugh. You can sign your name either

Sara Annette Loring Fitzhugh, or Sallie Ann Fitz — just as you happen to feel.”

“Look at her blush! Look at her!” cried both the boys.

“Daughter, they must not tease you,” said Mr. Loring.

“What did you all come home so early for?” said Hope. “We didn’t expect you until three or four.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Loring, with some pride, “Sallie thought Mr. Fitzhugh’s attentions were becoming too marked, and really they were, coming from the host, who had duties toward his mother’s other guests. Then the boys must get up early in order to get back to Princeton, so that I thought, on the whole, we might as well leave early. I could see that it surprised Mrs. Fitzhugh, for she let a little of it creep into her manner.”

“It did no harm,” said Sallie, quietly.

“Did the Grand Mogul sob and weep when she saw I wasn’t with you?” asked Hope.

“Oh, I regretted for you long ago,” said Sallie, “so she was prepared for the blow. Come, mother, dear,” she added, rising gracefully, “let’s leave these night owls and get our beauty sleep.”

Laflin and Jermyn, having denuded the turkey, prepared to follow them.

“Well, so long, Hope, my boy!” said Laflin, rumpling up her hair.

"Good night, father. Au revoir, old chap," said Jermyn to Hope, kissing the end of her nose — a trick she particularly hated. "Come on, Laffin. Nowhere to go but bed. Mother, I'm not coming up to town any more. I've got to work."

After they were gone and Hope and her father were left alone, Hope saw that his old restless, nervous manner was returning. She watched him a moment in silence, then came forward swiftly.

"Now, Daddy, tell me," she said. "I'm ready to hear."

Mr. Loring looked startled.

"Tell you what, Hope?"

"Tell me all about it."

Mr. Loring glanced about the room, as if mentally giving it up.

"It is nothing, daughter."

Hope followed his gaze. Then she said, intuitively:

"Who was here, to-night, Daddy?"

"Oh! To-night? Why should you think any one was?"

"Because at dinner you were all right. I come home a few hours later and find you all wrong. Who was it? Tell me, or I shall ask Mason."

"Well," said Mr. Loring, hesitating and sighing, "I well —"

"Out with it!" cried Hope, stamping her foot.

"Well," said Mr. Loring, desperately, "it was only Robertson and Morris and Owen."

"What did they want?"

"Oh, just a friendly call," said Mr. Loring, recovering himself, and making a last violent effort to throw her off the scent.

"A party call, I suppose," cried Hope, derisively. "I think I see those men calling together for the fun of it!" She came close to him, and laid her hand on his shoulder. "Daddy, dear, you are in trouble, and these three men made it worse. Tell me the whole truth! Are we going to lose — this?" with a wave of her hand.

Mr. Loring clenched and unclenched his hands, and beads of perspiration stood on his brow.

"Oh, Hope, I had not meant to tell you, but your sympathy is so sweet. Hope, I am ruined!"

"Ruined, dearest! How ruined? Don't we own all this, and —"

"Yes, we own it to-night, but in a day — perhaps in an hour, after the Stock Exchange opens in the morning — you know how bad news travels — I may not even own a dollar. My ruin will be awful, Hope, awful."

"Don't give way," said Hope, shaking him gently. "Tell me more! Who did it?"

"Those infernal bankers got scared and won't let me have any more money!"

"Take mine, dearest!" cried Hope, eagerly. "I have two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, you know —"

"Child, you don't understand," said Mr. Loring, despairingly. "It would take millions to save me!"

"Oh!" said Hope, blankly.

"Yes, millions! The rascals want me to pay them three millions of dollars before twelve o'clock on Saturday. I owe them six, but they let me off on three. Kind, aren't they?"

Hope made no answer, and Mr. Loring got up and paced the floor excitedly.

"They are fools!" he cried. "Fools! They don't believe that it will ruin me. They think I will get the money somewhere else and simply release them. Such selfishness is criminal in its short-sightedness. A failure like mine will ruin thousands and shake the public confidence. It may be months before it will rally!"

"Don't fail, then!" cried Hope. "Borrow it somewhere else! Mortgage everything! Sell our jewels and silver! Take my money and Sallie's, and fight it out! You've always said that this copper deal would make you rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and that then you would retire and spend your time with us. Fight it out!"

"My brave baby," said Mr. Loring, regarding her with tender pride. "But you don't realise.

Nobody else will lend it. I have sounded every one I am willing to approach, but they are afraid, and naturally they wonder why my own banks will not supply it. There is nothing which travels so impalpably in the stock market as fear. Intangible as it is, I could see it in young Hamilton's face to-night that he understands my danger and is afraid I am going to apply to him. I met him in the hall to-night, but he rushed past me with only a hasty greeting."

"Nonsense, Daddy! How could Mr. Hamilton possibly know? That's imagination. He has no way of knowing. I'd like to see him suspect my father of failing!"

As Mr. Loring shook his head, Hope came and sat on the arm of his chair, caressing his hand.

"Have you asked Mr. Stuart?" she said, suddenly, after a moment of silence.

"No, but it wouldn't do any good. I know the man too well."

"Ah," thought Hope, "but perhaps not as well as I know him since he so plainly said he wanted me to marry his son. I don't believe he would dare refuse me!" Then aloud she said, "Well, hold on to your five days. You are down, but you are not out. In five days anything might happen!"

"True!" said Mr. Loring, straightening his shoulders.

"It's a horrid time to talk about such things," said Hope, getting up. "Everything looks clearer in daylight. A little sleep will clear the cobwebs from your brain, and in the morning when you wake the very sunshine will make you feel better. Then you come up to my den, and I'll make your coffee myself. Compliments of Miss Hope Loring to Mr. John Loring (known in private life as the dearest father in the world), and will he be pleased to breakfast with her on bacon and eggs and coffee, cooked by the famous New Orleans chef, Mammy Loring, at nine o'clock on Tuesday morning in her den on the fifth floor. R. S. V. P."

Mr. Loring smiled, and laid his hands on her shoulders.

"Hope, my girl, you have done more for me this night than you know."

"But will you come to breakfast with me?" persisted Hope.

"Yes."

"And is your headache quite gone?"

"Not quite. But I feel better. Better in heart and mind, and richer in hope and faith. Do you know, child, I actually thought of — ending it all!"

Hope slipped her arm around her father's waist, and he laid his arm around her shoulders. Although she said nothing, he felt that she understood.

"Come, Daddy. Go to bed, and I'll come in

and smooth your hair until you fall asleep. It's too bad I made you spill all your bromide. You haven't any left."

"No, no!" said Mr. Loring, hastily, "I am glad you did! I—I would rather have your hand on my head, daughter!"

Hope squeezed him ecstatically.

"Hark," said Hope, pausing to listen. "The boys are singing the 'Steps Song!'"

They stood listening, with their arms around each other until the song was ended.

"Oh, father," sighed Hope, gustily. "I wish I were a boy and could go to Princeton!"

CHAPTER XIV.

ON the morning of the last day allowed Mr. Loring by his bankers, I. Stonington Stuart sat in his private office, dictating to his stenographer, Miss McCloskey. The room was the third of an imposing suite, and was furnished with a handsome, deeply tufted leather couch, in addition to its regular furniture.

The morning paper lay across his knees, with a paragraph flaming up into his eyes as if written in words of fire. Fortunately he had discovered it in the seclusion of his brougham on the way downtown, so that no one had observed his emotion. But the moment he entered his building, every clerk, from his confidential secretary to the office boy, looked out the corner of his eye, and knew that Mr. Stuart had seen it. But not a head was lifted from ledger or typewriter, and in a respectful silence the great financier passed all the curious and malicious and delighted subordinates and gained his sanctum.

The marriage notice of his son! He had not

thoroughly believed that Stony was married. The announcement of his appointment as the foreign representative of Carroll & Beaufort of New Orleans! The names, in the passenger list of the steamer which sailed yesterday, of Mr. and Mrs. I. Stonington Stuart, Jr.! The very word "junior" was an insult.

"Carroll & Beaufort!" he muttered. "That's Loring, as I'm alive. Loring always backed those children of mine. Well, watch me get even with him! I'll bide my time if I have to wait twenty years. I'll show him what it is to strike me in my tenderest spot and ruin the dream of a lifetime. If I had really believed that boy had married that damned little Jew, I'd have locked him up and had them divorced! Well, Loring, he laughs best who laughs last."

He became aware that the eyes of the stenographer were fixed on him expectantly.

The great financier leaned back in his swivel-chair, with his finger-tips together, and dictated the following letter:

"Messrs. Greenebaum and Rothgerber.

"GENTLEMEN:—Your favour of the 2d inst., offering bonds to the amount of three million dollars bearing four per cent. interest, on the new town to be built in Texas by the National and Allied Pork

Packing Company, Ltd., including hotel, water-works, stock-yards, school, bank, church, and model cottages, has received my personal attention, and after due consideration I beg to say that I am prepared to invest in your venture to that extent, and my representatives will hold themselves in readiness to meet yours at any time you may care to name.

“Yours truly.”

The private secretary entered with half a dozen cards. Mr. Stuart glanced at them, and said, curtly:

“Tell them to wait — all but these four; get rid of those. Now, Miss McCloskey, I think that will do for the present.”

As Miss McCloskey gathered up her papers and went out, the telephone rang.

“Well,” said Mr. Stuart, answering. “Yes, yes, good morning, Robertson. What makes you think so? What? No. I am not through! Don’t cut me off, Central! Damn that girl! Hello, Central! That you, Robertson? That damned Central cut us off. No, I am not even interested in it. What’s that? Have I seen who? Loring? No, haven’t seen him since his daughter’s tea. Good-bye. Now what,” he said to himself, as he hung up the receiver, “did he call me up for? And why did he ask me if I’d seen Loring?”

“Please, sir,” said the office boy, entering,

"there's a young lady who says she must see you to oncet. There's a whole roomful waiting, but she made me come in wit dis!"

Mr. Stuart took the card.

"Miss Hope Loring! Show her in at once, and tell my secretary to see that we are not disturbed. If she has come to cajole me into forgiving that ungrateful puppy, I'll soon show her where I stand!" he muttered, as the office boy went out. But Hope had not seen the morning papers, and perhaps was the only one of Mr. Stuart's friends who was at that hour ignorant of Stony's marriage and departure.

As Hope entered, her manner was nervous, but not excited. Like all women, she brought the social element into business. Mr. Stuart involuntarily passed his hand over his hair and buttoned his coat.

"Good morning, Mr. Stuart," said Hope, gaily, "you didn't expect to see me here on business, did you? But that's what I'm here for."

"Business," said Mr. Stuart, smiling indulgently, "well, what can I do for you? Contribute to some charity or lend you money to organise a Woman's Exchange, or —"

"Woman's Exchange!" said Hope, indignantly. "Do I look like it? I never bother with messy things like that. When I operate, I plunge! Did father ever tell you how I made my first money?"

"You made money?" said Mr. Stuart, incredulously. "I should think you more capable of spending it." He began to think she did not intend to speak of it. It showed tact, at least, he thought.

"Thanks for your good opinion," said Hope, "but it shows that you don't know me. I made fifteen thousand dollars once!"

She leaned back in her chair in order to let him take in the full effect of her statement.

"Fifteen thousand dollars!" exclaimed the banker, leaning forward. "You? How?"

"Ah," said Hope, smiling brilliantly, "I thought that would make you sit up. You see it was this way. Did you ever hear of Mme. St. Cloud's school in New Orleans?"

"Often," said Mr. Stuart.

"Well, one of the girls got hold of some lottery tickets, and as we each had savings-bank accounts, we all bought them. It was a speculation to make money enough to give Mme. St. Cloud's mother a loving-cup for her seventieth birthday."

Mr. Stuart leaned back in his chair, laughing heartily.

"Poor little girls," he said.

"Yes, but listen. Then one girl figured up that the numbers of her ticket added up to a total of thirteen, and this stampeded all the other thirteen-ticket girls, and they all came down on my poor

little friend for the return of their money. Of course she couldn't give it to them, and in the row that followed they declared they would tell Mme. St. Cloud. At this, insolvency threatened the others, and things were in an awful state."

"Like a panic on the Stock Exchange," said Mr. Stuart.

"Exactly. Well, I said I would take all the tickets that added up to a total of thirteen. You'd think that would have ended it, wouldn't you?"

"Well," said Mr. Stuart, cautiously, "I never express an opinion as to what women will do."

"That's where you are clever," said Hope. "But if you will believe it, those girls reminded me that it was Friday, and the thirteenth of the month, and they told me I would hoodoo the whole school if I didn't wait until the next day. Now doesn't it make you mad to have your financial operations interfered with, Mr. Stuart?"

"It makes me wild!"

"Me, too! So I stuck it out. I told them furthermore that I was thirteen years old, and that I had just discovered that I had thirteen hundred dollars and thirteen cents in the bank. I bought right and left, and we recorded the sales. When the drawing took place, I found that I had won fifteen thousand dollars!"

"Really?"

“Cross my heart and hope to die if I didn’t. But of all the rows! It got into the papers and raised such a storm that my father sent for me and I came home.”

“I hope that taught you the lesson that gamblers are always punished,” said Mr. Stuart.

“Oh,” cried Hope, with crimson cheeks, but endeavouring not to show her disgust, “is that the way you look at it? *My father* said it was a pity to have the blow fall on a little girl who had no idea she was doing wrong. That is the way my father looked at it. And to prove to everybody how completely he endorsed me in every way, he gave me an additional fifty thousand, and invested it for me.”

“Upon my word, Miss Hope,” said Mr. Stuart, laughing, “you are an excellent business man, but I hope you won’t teach Amy to gamble. With your grandmother’s fortune, you must have a quarter of a million by this time.”

“Just a quarter of a million. But call me a financier, please. That is what successful men like you and me are called,” said Hope, demurely, although her spirit rose at the word he used. “Oh, I wouldn’t dream of corrupting either Amy or Cuthbert! But what word do you apply to your transactions in stocks, may I ask?”

"Oh, — er, that is business! You can't apply the word gambling to fluctuations in the market."

"Certainly not!" said Hope, biting her lip.
"That, as you say, is business."

By this time Mr. Stuart was sure that Hope did not even know of the wretched affair, or he felt convinced that he could have detected it in her manner. This knowledge was so soothing to his vanity that he became expansive.

"Well, then, as we are both men of affairs, we can discuss business on an equality. Would you like to be vice-president of this bank? The position is open to a rising young man like yourself."

The great man enjoyed girlish beauty as well as any, and the sight of Hope's fresh and dewy face caused him as complete satisfaction as when he had successfully conducted a business affair of magnitude. He looked upon her vigorous girlhood as a fitting sacrifice to be made to his anæmic son. She would shed lustre on the name of Stuart even were she as penniless as he hoped to render her.

"I'll think the matter over," said Hope, gaily.

"Where is your money now? Are you prepared to invest?"

"It happens to be invested in this silver bag," said Hope, tapping her chatelaine belt. "It has been idle for a month, and I drew it out this morning

in order to deposit it, as a reward of merit, with you, if you will do what I ask."

The banker smiled. He did not yet take her seriously, although in a dim way he recognised that she was different, but "little Hope was becoming a woman" was the way he put it to himself. He did not know that the child had already become a woman in the last few days, and was ready to make a woman's sacrifice, though guided by an instinct as immature as that which prompts a toddling baby to pat a mad dog on the head.

"Mr. Stuart," she said, nervously, "would you do a great favour for me?"

It was his future daughter-in-law asking.

"Anything in my power," he said, indulgently. He liked to be pleaded with and coaxed for favours. It was that vanity which Amy and Cuthbert played upon, but which Stony spurned.

"Perhaps you won't," said Hope, slowly, "when you know what I want. I want" — she hesitated, and then looked him bravely in the eyes, — "I want you to lend my father three millions of dollars!" She gasped after she had taken the plunge.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Stuart. He gripped the arms of his chair to conceal his excitement. Hope was a gold mine of information if he could only work it dexterously. The innocence of the girl appalled him. He wondered if she were a fool.

"I suppose," said Hope, anxiously, "that I am the most unfortunate person in the world to have approached you. Any other girl would have been diplomatic and wheedled you. But I do not understand policy. I can only blurt out the truth in its baldest form and trust to your friendship for my father to help him in his emergency."

"Is your father so seriously embarrassed?" asked the banker, benevolently.

"He is, indeed! His case is desperate!"

"How desperate?"

"Oh, Mr. Stuart," cried Hope, encouraged by the interest in his manner, "you are such a friend of ours that I will tell you. He is going to fail — he will be ruined if you don't come to his assistance. He will give you the best of securities, and all you want. But he must have that money by twelve to-day!"

"Why so soon as that?" asked Mr. Stuart, raising his hand to cover a slight cough.

"Because," said Hope, scornfully, "those three vultures whom he has always considered his friends, and who have been entertained by us in our house, Mr. Owen, Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Morris, came to see him Monday night and told him in his own library, not only that they wouldn't let him have another cent, but that he must pay them this sum before twelve o'clock to-day, or they would begin to

realise upon his securities. That's the kind of men they are!"

Mr. Stuart regarded her with a queer smile.

"Did your father know that you were going to tell me this?"

"Certainly not! My father would never have allowed me to come if he had known! He has too much pride."

The banker looked at the young girl with incredulous admiration. Yes, it was like her innocent bravery to try to save him in this manner. She was just the wife for Cuthbert.

"Yes," he said, again with that queer smile, "John Loring has too much — pride, did you say? Yes, pride, to let you come and ask me to lend him money."

"But you will do it?" cried Hope, anxiously. "Just think, Mr. Stuart. It means ruin for us all."

"Oh, not so bad as that," said Mr. Stuart, reassuringly. Then he added, "Don't you know that a sudden break in the market would ruin him just as quickly as if they compel him to pay up?"

"Certainly I do, but my father has forced the price up to nearly three hundred dollars a share, and he can hold it near that point indefinitely, he says, if only these men could be pacified."

Mr. Stuart's glance rested on the morning paper, and in an instant Hope's influence was gone and a

vindictive rage took possession of him. He envied those bankers the first chance at Loring's ruin. He wanted to ruin Loring himself.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Miss Hope. I will see those men and endeavour to influence them. They are, in a way, open to suggestions from me."

Hope's radiant face disconcerted him, but before she could speak the private secretary entered and said :

"Pardon me for disturbing you, Mr. Stuart, contrary to your orders, but the cashier thinks the safe has been tampered with. The inside door of the small safety deposit vault will not open, and we wish you to see it before we send for experts. The time-lock has —"

"Say that I will come immediately." Then, as Hope turned to the window, he said, in an undertone to his secretary: "Go to my brokers and place unlimited orders to sell copper. Place the same orders with young Hamilton."

"Mr. Hamilton is waiting to speak to you, sir!"

"Ah, then, ask him to come in, and telephone the order to his firm."

As the secretary bowed and withdrew, Mr. Stuart turned to Hope, saying:

"I have asked in a young friend of yours to entertain you until I return. I wish to discuss this matter further with you."

"Oh, Mr. Stuart! How can I ever thank you!" cried Hope, impulsively.

He waved aside her thanks, and went out rather hurriedly. A moment or two later Cedric Hamilton entered.

"Hope! You here?" he cried, in surprise.

The girl's face was so full of delight that he could not fail to see it.

"Yes, I! How lucky that I should meet you!"

"I wish," said Hamilton, taking her hand, "that you believed that well enough to make the luck of meeting me permanent. I wish you wanted that luck. I wish you looked forward to it every day. Hope! Hope! I love you! I have loved you ever since the day I saw you first!"

"Did you love me the day of the football game, when I begged you to stay with me and you wouldn't?" asked Hope, shyly.

"I loved you too well not to go where I was needed most. You didn't need me at all. The team did. Did you care because I went?"

"Yes, I cared most awfully."

"Hope!"

"But I would have hated you if you had stayed. The team did need you, and — well, I needed you, too. But not so much as they did. You are the best coach Princeton ever had, Jermyn says. Just

think of being of so much importance that you can help the men you love to win!"

"That's all very nice," said Hamilton, dubiously. "but I wish you loved me as much as you love the whole football team. It would be a more specific outlook."

"Oh, I do! No, wait a minute! I mean — you know I like you, don't you?"

"But I want more, Hope! I want your love. I want you for my wife. I want your sympathy and encouragement. I want to be something — everything to you. I want to help you over the rough places, and comfort you when you are discouraged. I want to ease you when you are suffering and rest you when you are tired, and sympathise with you alike in joy and sorrow. I want to be the background for the picture of your beauty, the setting for the jewel of your love, the home your ardent spirit always returns to in storm or stress. Will you help me to be all that to you, Hope?"

A week ago the young girl would scarcely have realised that sorrow or distress could ever overtake her. But the appalling interview with her father, the fear that he would do something desperate if ruined, and plunge all their lives into bitterest woe, had never left her. So that her heart leaped at her lover's words, and she realised that beneath all

that she had hitherto admired lay the real strength of the strong man — the strength of the soul.

“Oh, wait a minute before I answer you,” she said, in a low tone. Her eyes were swimming in tears. “I want you to know me as I am. You don’t know me as I know myself. I do — I have done many things of which you would not approve. I did not realise at the time. I thought they were merely mischievous or funny. But now I see that they were bold and shocking. You might sometime come to think they were unwomanly. They might mortify you — make you ashamed of me. Oh, I could die at the thought of what ruin I may have wrought!”

She buried her face in her hands. He took them down gently.

“Don’t tell me about them, dear! I don’t ask, nor want to know. Nothing that you ever could do, Hope, would make any difference with my love. I love your beauty and your success and your quick wit and your bright youth. Yet if you were poor and forsaken and ill, if your beauty and health were things of the past, I would love you — the real you, to the end. Do you understand me? Do you believe me? How can I ever put into words how I love you!”

“Oh, I never expected to be loved like that!” cried Hope. “I — I am not worthy of it — now.

Wait! Will you wait — a little while? Until I can atone for something I have done?"

"I will wait as long as you say if you will only tell me that you love me. Just say the words once, dear!"

"No, not yet. But — you may love me! And you know that I wouldn't say that if I didn't intend to be square with you. You believe that I will be square with you, don't you?"

"I do, indeed, Hope. That is what I love most in you. Your squareness with men and with women and with yourself."

"Thank you! I like to hear you say that. I'll try always to live up to what you think of me. I couldn't do better than that, could I?"

"No, you couldn't, for to me you are perfect."

Hope gave him a look in which gratitude and love were mingled. Then she passed her hand across her brow, and said, briskly:

"Now I will tell you what I came here for this morning. No, not a word more on that subject! I've got too much work to do, and when you make love to me you throw me off! I wouldn't tell anybody in the world but you, but I've done something this morning — that is, I think I've done something this morning, that will make a big change in our fortunes, but I shall not know for sure until Mr. Stuart comes back. Now listen. My father will

fail to-day unless he can get three millions of dollars, and I came here to get Mr. Stuart to let him have them. His other bankers only gave him until twelve o'clock to-day to raise the money, and Mr. Stuart is not only his best friend, but his last chance."

"Fail!" cried Hamilton, in a horrified voice. "Your father? Are you sure?"

"Of course I'm sure! Father told me himself. So as Mr. Stuart is a great friend of mine, too, I just came down here and asked what father was too proud to ask — for one friend to come to the rescue of another."

She looked at Hamilton so evidently expecting approval that he could not meet her eyes. He turned away, saying to himself:

"My God! She has ruined her father without knowing it!"

"If you had only come to me instead!" he said, aloud.

"Don't look so worried. It's all right. Don't you see? Neither of us could have come to you under the circumstances."

This charming admission, which ordinarily would have delighted him, for once fell upon deaf ears. He paced up and down excitedly, all thought of love driven from his mind by the impending tragedy. Two things fought for supremacy in his thoughts. One was to avert the disaster. The other, if this

proved impossible, never to let Hope or her father know what she had done.

“Why do you look so anxious? Will it make a difference to you?”

“Every fluctuation of the market makes a difference to us!” Then to himself he said with a groan, “Oh, if Jermyn or Laflin were only here to sell right and left, we might be able to save something out of the wreck. Or, if Hope could only take my knowledge of the market and operate on the opposite side to her father. But that unprincipled Stuart—I wonder if he has already begun to sell?”

He excused himself to Hope, and seized Mr. Stuart’s telephone.

“Give me 9706 Broad. That you, Scott? How’s copper? Dropped how much? Any big orders to sell in last half-hour? Stuart? Cancel it! Cancel it, I say! I’m here in his office. I know what I’m about. I’ll explain later. I’ll be back in ten minutes. Good-bye!”

He hung up the receiver and gnawed his lip, muttering:

“Copper has dropped eleven points already. Either the rumour that Loring and Company are going to fail and that copper is a sale must be pretty well understood, or else Stuart is operating through other brokers.” He turned and looked at

Hope so steadily that she regarded him with growing anxiety.

"Oh, what is it?" she said, in a low tone.

"I wonder if I dare?" he said. "Hope, do you trust me?"

"You know I do!"

"Well," said Hamilton, with difficulty, "I have bad news — bad news for myself, but worse for your father. Be brave, and I'll tell you the whole truth. Can you stand it?"

"Yes, yes! Go on. I never faint!"

"Well, your father is going to fail."

"Anyway? In spite of all I've done?"

"Yes, in spite of everything. Stuart won't lend Mr. Loring money, because they are on opposite sides of the market. Understand?"

"Is Mr. Stuart interested in copper?" cried Hope, with frightened eyes.

"Yes, desperately. He has already begun to sell, and copper has dropped eleven points in the last half-hour. Do you follow me?"

"Why!" cried Hope, with pale cheeks, "he promised me to see those bankers, and influence them not to press father for their money! He promised —"

"He may even do that," said Hamilton, quickly. "But it won't have any effect if he bears the market. Nothing will make any difference if Stuart continues to sell! Do you understand?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Hope, eagerly. "Go on!"

"Now, even if your father fails, there is one way to act so as to save something from the wreck. You can do it by selling copper. Sell it right and left! Sell all you can! I would be your broker, only I'd rather not. Our building, just opposite here, is full of them. You could hardly make a mistake."

"Yes, yes. I know their names!"

"You will need money, but won't you let me —"

"I don't need it, fortunately. Just think," said Hope, scornfully, "I drew out every penny of my fortune — two hundred and fifty thousand dollars — this morning, intending to deposit it with Mr. Stuart out of gratitude! What a fool I am!"

"What a loving, trusting woman you are, Hope! But listen, for every moment is precious. Copper is now at two hundred and eighty-six dollars. You have enough money to sell twenty-five thousand shares. Give your orders to sell twenty-five thousand shares at the market, and to close out the transaction when it drops to one hundred dollars. It will probably go much below a hundred, but that is a safe figure."

"Twenty-five thousand shares at the market — close the transaction when it drops to one hundred dollars," repeated Hope. "I understand."

As the telephone rang again, she flew to answer it, for fear its ringing would bring Mr. Stuart.

"Yes, yes. He is here. It's for you, Cedric! Your partner wants you at once."

Hamilton seized Hope's hand, and kissed it, murmuring:

"Good-bye, dear! Sell copper! Don't be afraid. It's the only thing to do."

Hope turned to the telephone as he dashed out.

"He has just left. He will be there in five minutes. Good-bye!"

She rose from Mr. Stuart's swivel-chair. She looked around in a half-dazed way, and passed her hand over her brow, saying, whimsically:

"Oh, it's almost too much to ask of a girl to turn from a proposal to copper! But — the first thing to do is to get rid of Eugénie. What luck that I brought her instead of Mammy. Eugénie will obey me."

She opened the door a crack and beckoned to her maid.

"Eugénie, take the brougham and go home. Tell Mamma that I shall walk for the exercise."

As the Frenchwoman curtsied and withdrew, Hope said:

"There, that is settled. I'd like to stay here long enough to give Mr. Stuart a piece of my mind, but Cedric said to go at once — Why didn't I tell him that I loved him? — I wish I'd asked him what firm to go to. Nobody knows me. But I might operate

under another name. I might — why, of course. Actresses and dancers always have money, and always dabble in stocks. They won't know whether I'm Amelia Love or not under this veil. Oh, of course! No mirror in a banker's office! I wonder how a broker would know whether Amelia Love had enough money for margins? I wonder if you have to put up money for margins when you sell — especially when you sell something you haven't got? I know what I'll do. I'll go to a firm like Collins & Coker, of bankers and brokers. I'll open an account for Miss Amelia Love and deposit this money. Then they won't make any fuss about identity. I've always heard that money talked. I'll make mine lie for me. Then I'll place my orders and go home."

She paused with her hand on the door-knob to smile and say:

"I wonder what the boys will say when they know I am going to marry the Princeton coach!"

She had no sooner left than Mr. Stuart entered hurriedly.

"Why, where did she go? She must have gone out the other door. Got tired of waiting, I suppose. Perhaps it is just as well. But I wanted to ask her a few more questions."

He seated himself with a sheaf of papers in his hand, when the door opened precipitately and the

private secretary entered, with an apologetic face, announcing:

“Mr. Loring!”

“Ah, Loring! I’m glad to see you!” said Mr. Stuart, with his cold gray eye emitting a greenish gleam.

“I never would have guessed it from your secretary’s manner,” said Mr. Loring, coldly. “I might almost have expected from the obstacles he produced to prevent my seeing you that —”

“That what?” asked Mr. Stuart, as his visitor paused, ominously.

“That you were selling copper, and at the bottom of this unexpected slump.” Mr. Loring’s manner was deliberate.

“Ah,” said Mr. Stuart. “And if I am, why should my secretary have seemed to prevent your seeing me?”

“Orders from you, possibly. Or possibly you were receiving a private tip on the market. The fellow simply overstepped the insolence of his kind.”

Mr. Stuart raised his hand to conceal a malignant smile. Mr. Loring had wounded him through Stony, had he? Well, he would injure Mr. Loring through Hope! It would do him good to see Mr. Loring’s face when he knew that Hope had innocently betrayed him — or wait! Wouldn’t it be safer to allow him to discover it from Hope herself

after he returned home? On the whole, that would be better.

“Why should I have given orders of that nature? I am not afraid of any one that I know of!”

Mr. Loring saw at once that Mr. Stuart for some reason had become his implacable enemy. He naturally thought of the paragraph in the morning papers, which he knew must be gall and bitterness to the arrogant man before him. He also saw his own ruin confirmed, stamped, labelled, and held up for the gaping public to see. The anguish of the knowledge was well-nigh unbearable. He leaned forward, gripping the arms of his chair.

“Stuart, I know you too well not to suspect you of any meanness. Answer me this, if you dare. Are you selling copper?”

“I refuse to answer!”

“Then you are! When you know it means my ruin!”

“I did not know that!”

“Well, you know it now. Stop your orders, Stuart! My friends are rallying around me and buying feverishly, but some enormous hidden influence is against us, and the market refuses to rally. Naturally, from past experience, I suspected you. Will you stop selling?”

“I owe you one, Loring. You squeezed me badly in '93.”

“But it was only a squeeze. It did not even cripple you. This will not only cripple — it will ruin me. Ruin, I tell you, man! Drag my wife and daughters down to beggary. Besides that, what you have already sold to-day squares us. I have lost a million this morning so far, which went straight from my pocket into yours. Will you call it even and desist now?”

Mr. Stuart looked down, and laid his finger-tips together deliberately.

“I think not, Loring. You have a tongue in your head, and you are rather free with it. You have given me a taste of it this morning. I — think — I shall — continue — to — sell — copper!”

Mr. Loring wiped his brow.

“Then you intend to ruin me?”

“I am sorry if any action of mine inconveniences you! I understood that you were under pressure from another quarter!”

Loring lifted his head.

“How could you know that?”

Stuart's lips widened into the semblance of a smile.

“Sometime I intend to let you know, but not now. When I heard it, I at once notified Messrs. Morris, Robertson, and Owen not on any account to press you. You look incredulous, but when you

return to your office you will find a message saying that you need not worry about pressure from them."

Loring said nothing, but he saw the black abyss which Stuart had prepared for him.

"Yet, after that warning, *you* continue to sell?"

"And not I alone! They are covering their losses as well!"

The two men sat staring at each other.

"My wife!" murmured Mr. Loring, as if to himself. "Sallie! How will they bear it? And, oh, my God! Hope!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Stuart, leaning forward, with a tigerish licking of his lips. "That reminds me. You are very fond of your family, and very proud of your loose methods of bringing them up. But your boy's influence has ruined mine at college. You aided and abetted his mad marriage, if indeed it is a marriage! — and you got him that position with Carroll & Beaufort. I know you, you Pharisee! You despise us Christians and our God-fearing ways, and you are introducing anarchy into our midst. If I am instrumental, in God's hands, of removing your wealth and influence, and the public you are deluding can see how God humbles the pride of the wicked and exalts the just, it may be the means of leading many a soul in the paths of righteousness!"

"God forgive you for your blasphemy, Stuart!

Let Him judge between us. I have no more to say."

Mr. Loring rose wearily, and started toward the door, but before he could reach it, it was pushed open violently from the other side, and Miss McCloskey and the private secretary rushed in.

"Oh, Mr. Stuart," cried Miss McCloskey. "Miss Loring has been knocked down by a runaway, and they are bringing her in here!"

"What? Miss Loring? You mean Sallie?" cried Mr. Loring, in agony.

But even as he spoke, Cedric Hamilton entered, carrying Hope in his arms, followed by a doctor who had been hastily summoned, and several excited clerks. Mr. Loring gave one look, and sank into a chair without power to move.

While they worked over her under the doctor's directions, Hamilton hurried to Mr. Loring's side.

"Is she dead?" asked Mr. Loring, in a whisper.

"No, indeed. Only unconscious. They are bringing her to. The doctor says it is not a fracture. She is only stunned."

"Let me go to her!" he cried, struggling to rise.

"No! Wait a moment. She needs air," said Hamilton, preventing him. "They have sent for Doctor Otto, the brain specialist. Listen, and let me tell you how it happened."

"Yes, yes. How did it happen? What was

the child doing down here? Ah, I know! She was coming to see me! She knew I was in trouble! Hope always stands by!"

"Of course. She wanted to help you. Well, I happened to see the whole thing. I was just coming out of our building opposite when I saw Hope crossing the street. She did not see the people running, nor seem to hear my shout. I couldn't reach her in time. As she fell, her head struck the curbstone, and she never moved again. I remembered this couch, and brought her in here. But take courage. Here is Doctor Otto."

Mr. Loring watched the doctor with feverish eagerness. The secretary was fanning her, and Miss McCloskey was chafing her wrists. The smell of restoratives was strong in the air. The two doctors made another examination of her head, whispered together, and then the agonised watchers saw Doctor Otto shake his head.

"Ask him!" gasped Mr. Loring, reaching out, as if for help.

"Tell us, doctor," said Hamilton, "will she live?"

"Oh, yes," said Doctor Otto, quickly, "she will live!"

"Thank God!" breathed her father, with the tears rolling down his cheeks.

In the deep silence which followed, broken only

by the rustling of the fan and the garments of those around her, Hope suddenly moved. Miss McCloskey slipped her arm under her head and assisted Hope in her struggle to rise. She sat up, leaning her head on Miss McCloskey's shoulder, but not attempting to speak. A spasm of pain crossed her face once or twice, and she moved her hands restlessly. The doctors watched her closely, exchanging a whisper or a sign occasionally.

Then Doctor Otto approached Cedric Hamilton, quietly saying:

"Are you well acquainted with Miss Loring?"

"Very! And this is her father. You may tell us the truth, doctor!"

"Very well. I will be honest with you. There is no fracture, but there seems to be a pressure on the brain, a blood clot or a dent, and what I fear is partial, if not complete loss of memory. Will you ask her a few questions, Mr. Hamilton? Something reminiscent. Then you may come, Mr. Loring, but not now."

"Be perfectly natural with her," continued Doctor Otto, as they approached.

"Hope, did Mammy come down with you this morning?"

Hope attempted to speak, but only gasped out:

"Yes."

She seemed irritated by her weakness, and frowned impatiently.

"Did she?" asked the doctor.

Mr. Hamilton shook his head.

"Try again."

"Where do you live, Hope?"

She looked up at him, blankly, making an effort to think; then whispered, weakly:

"I don't remember. My head aches."

"Well, where are you now?"

She looked around in a bewildered manner, hesitated, then faltered out:

"I don't know!"

"Were you ever here before?" persisted Mr. Hamilton, at a sign from the doctor.

"No."

"My God, doctor," whispered Cedric Hamilton, falling back in horror, "she was here only an hour ago."

"As I feared," said the doctor.

"Doctor Otto," said Mr. Loring, in a low, agonised tone, "let me speak to her!"

"You may try."

"Hope, daughter," faltered the stricken man, "don't you know me?"

Hope looked at him in a stupefied way. Her glance wandered to Cedric Hamilton, but without any sign of recognition.

"Don't you know me, either?" he said, suddenly.

Hope shook her head.

Mr. Loring seized the doctor's hand, crying wildly:

"My God, doctor! What does this mean?"

"It means, my dear sir, that your daughter's memory has totally disappeared. As I tried to explain, there must be some pressure on the brain which is not as yet apparent to us from the outside."

"But can nothing be done?"

"Not immediately. Let her recover from the shock naturally. She is badly shaken and bruised."

A deep silence fell as the doctor ceased speaking. A multitude of emotions were visible in Mr. Stuart's face, but the one which remained permanently was a sleek complaisance. Plainly it was the will of God to punish the Lorings.

Cedric Hamilton took the doctor aside and held a whispered consultation with him.

"This terrible shock will probably result in brain fever, but as she seems to have an excellent constitution to have recovered sufficiently in so short a time to speak even a word, there is every hope that she will recover. It may be that her memory will return in that manner, but I fear not. I shall watch the case very closely, but in any event she must be got

home quickly now, and every excitement kept from her. Explain this to her father."

Hamilton crossed the room, and whispered part of the doctor's message to Mr. Loring. He nodded his head in a partially dazed way.

"She knows nothing of her surroundings now?" he asked, taking Hamilton's hand, as if for support.

"No, nothing."

For a moment no one spoke or moved. Hope had leaned back, with her head on the young woman's shoulder, and closed her eyes.

Suddenly the stillness was broken by a confused roar from without — the unceasing noise of a great street from which rose sharp calls which finally resolved themselves into the newsboys crying:

"Uxtree! Uxtree! Twelve y'clock payyr! All about the Wall Street panic and reported failure of Loring & Company!"

Every one turned and looked anxiously at Mr. Loring. As the full import of the news came to his ear, he rose and stood listening with a smile on his face. Then he spoke:

"Thank God for Hope's merciful release from knowing what they are saying! Thank God, I say!"

CHAPTER XV.

IN the language of the Street, Mr. Loring was completely wiped out. The disaster which had overtaken Hope at the time made a few men conscience-stricken. For weeks Hope hovered between life and death, and upon her recovery Doctor Otto's diagnosis had proved a correct one, although at the time of its delivery he had expressed it as a fear rather than a probability. Her memory was completely gone.

Men said afterward to each other that they were sorry now that they hadn't gone to Loring's rescue. They professed to have been ignorant of how grave his situation was. They "thought he would pull through." "It was a shame to let such a man as Loring go to smash." And they wondered "why So-and-so didn't help him?" It was so evidently So-and-so's duty.

Cedric Hamilton was almost indiscreet in his denunciation of Mr. Stuart and the other three men who had forced Mr. Loring's failure. Mr. Stuart heard of these comments, and in offended dignity withdrew his patronage from the firm. It afforded

Hamilton the opportunity he had long been waiting for of telling I. Stonington Stuart to go to the devil, which he did with a fluency which his classmates would have recognised as the real thing.

But much had to be forgiven in Cedric Hamilton, for he was heavily burdened in those days. The daily papers kept him in a constant fright, for close on the heels of the gossip of the Loring failure came paragraph upon paragraph of advertising for Miss Amelia Love. First, it was reported that she had caused the failure by her unlimited orders to sell, backed by every cent of her enormous fortune. Then her brokers were interviewed, and Collins & Coker gave out authoritatively that the dancer had not begun to sell copper until it had dropped fifteen points. Then, after a lapse of a few days, Mr. Leopold's story that Miss Love was resting in the country fell to pieces from the assiduity of the reporters. They pursued the poor manager; they dogged him by day and haunted him by night. Why had Collins & Coker not heard from her? Why was all the money simply left deposited to her account? Why had she given a false address? Where was she? If not ill, why did she not return to the stage? Then, as Mr. Loring's entire fortune was swept away, as the Fifth Avenue house, the place on the Sound, and Coolmeath, the estate on the Hudson were all sold, and debtors even claimed

the plate and family jewels, Mr. Loring began a search for Hope's money. All trace of it was lost. Her bankers declared that she had drawn out every cent the morning of her injury. Cedric Hamilton had witnessed the accident and knew that she had not been robbed. Where had it got to? Things were getting so warm for the manager of the Oriole that one morning the assistant manager met reporters with the announcement that Mr. Leopold had sailed for Europe to book new attractions for the Oriole from the London and Paris music halls.

The disappearance of Mr. Leopold relieved Cedric Hamilton of a great anxiety, for Hamilton alone had recognised Hope at the Oriole, and knew to whom the money at Collins & Coker belonged.

But the secret weighed on him. He heard the doctor advise foreign travel for Hope, and knew where to obtain the means for it, but dared not betray poor Hope's pitiful little secret to her father and mother. He knew they would forgive her in spite of their grief and dismay at the madcap proceeding, but even to seem to take advantage of her affliction by an explanation was more than he could bear the thought of. He offered in vain to advance Mr. Loring money. He begged for Jermyn to remain at Princeton and take his degree, but at most Jermyn would only accept a position in Hamilton's office, and though they had no room for him, Hamil-

ton cheerfully kicked out another fellow with two years' experience, and made a place for Jermyn Loring, who was totally inexperienced, at twice the salary. Fortunately neither Jermyn nor his father knew this, but Hamilton took a vicious pleasure in doing it. It was so little to do when he wanted to do so much. As a last resort he confessed to Mr. Loring all that had taken place between Hope and himself, and begged to be allowed to marry her now, but that proposition Mr. Loring was almost haughty in refusing. That would be taking advantage of Hope's condition with a vengeance! Strange, now, how different the ideals of two men of honour can be, in regard to loyalty and duty — especially those of the father and the lover!

So Hamilton was obliged to stand by in dumb suffering and see the Lorings give up every luxury and be crowded into an apartment beyond the north end of Central Park. He witnessed the grief of their parting with Mammy and Ephum, who were sent to Mrs. Van Tassel in Westchester. The white master and mistress and the old black couple told each other loving lies at parting, — Mrs. Loring not daring to let Mammy know that they could not afford to keep them, but declaring that the doctor said they must go. To negroes the doctor's word is law.

But while Hamilton saw much, he saw only what

the Lorings could not conceal. Of the real bitterness of their poverty he was in ignorance. Of course there was no necessity for the wholesale sacrifice of everything. Mr. Loring could have kept enough to maintain his family for life, and no one would have respected him less, while many would have winked the eye and said he was "a smart fellow," and probably have given him a lift afterward. But, as this was Mr. Loring's first failure, much must be excused. He literally failed for all he was worth, and his family nearly starved in consequence. They tried to keep one servant, but she was so wasteful, they dismissed her, and little as it would have been credited, the painful truth was that at one time they were sore put to it to get enough to eat.

Of course that sort of pride is reprehensible, especially as Mrs. Van Tassel was in easy circumstances and tenderly fond of her sister's whole family, admiring Mr. Loring extravagantly, and consulting him in every emergency. But the Lorings never thought of asking help. They expected "to get along" until Mr. Loring could gain his footing again. It was only a question of time, in their opinion, so they bore hardships uncomplainingly and looked forward with confidence.

The thing which astonished these simple-minded people the most was the ease with which they were

dropped by their fashionable acquaintances. Even in the South, they knew that an entire loss of fortune was a tremendous calamity, bringing mortification and discomfort in its train, but blood and family were always left and never forgotten. Old friends stood by the ruined ones and offered the one thing that pride could accept — sympathy. But here — the Lorings actually laughed and made merry over the excuses trumped up in accidental meetings by former guests and friends who had joyfully accepted their princely hospitality, offered without stint or reason to all those who crossed their threshold.

Amy Whiting was the only one of the young girls, and Norman Fitzhugh and Hamilton of the men, to whom the change of residence made no difference. Mrs. Stuart had not called, but she wrote a note which Mrs. Loring read half through and tore up. The colour in her cheeks and the angry sparkle in her eyes caused Sallie to ask what was in the letter, but beyond the hint that it was about Hope, Mrs. Loring would never tell.

But Hope was their great grief. The change in her was heart-breaking. She knew only those whom she had seen since the accident, and remembered nothing from the past. She was quiet, submissive, indifferent, but gentle and affectionate, and

seemed to take more comfort in helping her mother and Sallie to take care of the apartment than in anything else. She often asked to be allowed to do this or that, and they humoured her, thankful that she showed interest in anything.

One afternoon, about three months after the failure, Mrs. Loring was moving about the tiny front room of the apartment, trying to dust the furniture. I say trying advisedly, for the duster was tucked under her arm oftener than it was in her hand, and the newspaper or a longing glance out of the window claimed more of her attention than her work. She had never been brought up to lift her hand to anything useful, so that the simplest household duty appeared to her an almost insurmountable obstacle. Sallie, belonging to a later generation, was a shade better, but even to Sallie trifles assumed alarming proportions when no advice was to be had. It was Hope who fell most naturally into household ways. By intuition she seemed to know how, and she instructed both Sallie and her mother in matters which they knew she must have learned from unconsciously observing Mammy. Little evidences of memory like these were all they had to feed their hope upon, for of events and persons she had been most familiar with, her mind was a blank.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Loring, laying down the paper hastily and making a few ineffectual passes

with her duster at the photographs on the table, "this will never do. But it is curious to think that that little dancer, Amelia Love, should have made all that money out of Mr. Loring's failure, and then disappeared so completely. Jermyn says it is a more original way of advertising than losing her jewels!"

A key in the latch of the outer door made her cry out:

"John, dear, is that you?"

Mr. Loring came in and kissed her tenderly. He had lost a little of the cheeriness from his manner, and the frankness of his gaze now held something stern in it. But his manner to his family grew if possible more affectionate and gentle.

"Did you have a good day, dear?"

"Not very," he answered, wearily. "Hamilton is the only one who seems ready and willing to invest, but I won't allow him to, because he might be doing it for Hope's sake. That young man's manner impresses me. Libbie, he insists that I need never have failed if I had come to him, and whenever I say anything about the cowardly informer who let Stuart into the secret of my weakness, he fidgets and invariably changes the subject. I believe he knows. But I can't imagine who it could have been!"

"Never mind, dear. It would do you no good

to know. It would only hurt you to discover that perhaps it was a friend whom you trusted."

"What do you think I have to tell you?" he asked, as if unwilling to consider such a supposition.

"I can't imagine."

"Well, I got a letter from Carroll & Beaufort of New Orleans a few weeks ago, saying that they were in receipt of letters from I. Stonington Stuart, so damaging to his son's character that they had been obliged to cable Stony that he could no longer consider himself connected with their firm. By the same mail I had one from Stuart, enclosing one from Carroll & Beaufort to him, thanking him for his nobility in putting them on their guard, and saying they appreciated how it must have wounded the pride of so honourable a man to be obliged to inform on his son. The poor children sailed at once and landed to-day. I had a telegram."

"Oh, John Loring! Do you know what I believe Mr. Stuart intends to do? I think he will force a separation between those two young people. He could bear that sort of a scandal, because it would uphold him in his opposition to the marriage. Isn't he cruel!"

"He is a type. But let us forget him if we can. I must ask Hamilton if we cannot do something for Stony. How has Hope been to-day?"

"She walked in the Park with Sallie, and seems as bright as usual. But she does not improve, John! If only we could let her travel as the doctor advises! Oh, where is that money of hers? It might be the means of restoring her mind if we could only find it."

"Have you questioned Mammy?"

"I have only seen Mammy once since sister Mary Lou took her. She made such a fuss then about not sending for her that I would hate to see her again. She just cries and goes on like a maniac because she did not insist upon going with Hope that day. She slapped Eugénie for leaving her, but Eugénie was only obeying Hope's orders. I don't blame her."

"I find no satisfaction in blaming the person who has caused a calamity. I once knew a family who made each other wretched by that habit. But it does no good. Suppose it were Eugénie's fault! Would that bring back Hope's memory?"

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if it would be as the doctor says — that time and Hope's youth should effect a cure without an operation? I do so dread that."

The sound of footsteps made them listen. It was Hope, who came in so quietly, in a manner so listless and so different from her former springing

step, that a mist came into her father's eyes at the recollection of the change.

Mr. Loring went to meet her. He kissed her, saying, anxiously :

“Don't you feel well, daughter?”

“Quite well, thank you,” she answered, listlessly.

He drew her down on his knee.

“Darling, wouldn't you like to go to Europe again in the summer? Don't you remember the beautiful big ship you and Mamma went on once?”

“I never went to Europe,” said Hope, quietly. “I live here — in this house.”

Mr. Loring looked so baffled that his wife said, eagerly :

“It is snowing to-day, Hope, just as it was the day you went down to draw out your money! Come, let's go draw it out of the bank again and spend it!”

“I never had any money,” said Hope, turning her wondering eyes full upon her mother. “When we go out, Sallie carries her little green purse and pays for things out of that.”

“What is Sallie doing?” asked Mr. Loring, hastily.

“She is getting dinner, but the gas range worries her,” said Hope.

“Let me go and help her,” said Mr. Loring, gently

putting Hope off his knee, and hurrying from the room.

Hope walked listlessly to the fire and sat down before it, watching the little blue flames lick the asbestos logs.

As Mrs. Loring stood looking wistfully at her, the door opened cautiously, and Mammy and Ephum fairly sneaked in, like two dogs fearful of being kicked out.

"Evenin', Miss Libbie!"

"Why!" cried Mrs. Loring, surprised almost beyond speech. "How in the world did you find your way in from Westchester?"

"We come all right," said Mammy, briefly. "How's lill Miss?"

"You needn't whisper," said Mrs. Loring, sadly. "She does not seem to hear anything we say unless we catch her eye and address her directly."

"Ain't she no bettah?" quavered Ephum.

Mrs. Loring buried her face in her hands for a moment, struggling not to break down. The presence of the old servants unnerved her.

"I am afraid not," she said, unsteadily. "I try to keep up before Mr. Loring and Sallie, but she is no better! My child, my pretty girl, has never for one moment regained her memory. She is so changed, Mammy! You can't think how changed she is! She is gentle where she used to be fiery;

quiet where she used to fill the house with her fun; listless where she used to keep us wild with fear of what she would do next. She sits as you see her most of the time, watching the flames or the shadows on the wall."

"Oh," moaned Mammy, as all three wept for a moment together, "hit was all my fault. I ought to gone wid huh. I baigged en baigged, but she thoo her shoe at me, en tole me she'd beat me to a pulp ef I didn't shet up, so I shet up!"

"Oh, how I used to talk to her about using such language! Then she would come and put her arms around me and say she didn't mean a thing by it, and her real nature was so tender and gentle, how could I scold her! And when I see her now with all her pretty fun gone for ever, I feel as if I would be willing to die just to hear her discussing football with the boys as she used to do — her eyes dancing and the colour fluttering in her cheeks!"

"Cyant de doctors do nuttin' foh her?" asked Ephum, wiping the tears from his withered face with his bandanna.

"Oh, they say that a frightful operation might restore her, but I have too little faith to try it just yet. But tell me, how are you both? Mammy, how is your leg?"

"Laws, Miss Libbie, 'tain't my laig dis time. Hit's a mizry in de bres'! I'se skeert dis wintah

gwine finish Ephum en me. Miss Ma'y Lou don' keep her house warm enough. Lawd! Dish yere heat feels powerful good to our ole bones, don' it, Ephum? "

Mrs. Loring turned away to hide a smile, though touched by the transparent ruse of the old people to get back to her.

"Now, Mammy, you needn't tell me that my own sister doesn't keep her house warm enough. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves to complain."

"Well, 'm," said Ephum, "we sho' would be kep' wahm ef we wuz wid you."

"Miss Libbie," said Mammy, indignantly, "gimme dat dus' rag en go an' sit down in dat rockin'-cheer. I 'clar to gracious hit mek me blush yaller to see you dustin'!"

"It doesn't hurt me, Mammy," said Mrs. Loring. "I rather like it." Nevertheless she surrendered the dust-cloth willingly, and with a relieved air watched Mammy straighten the room.

"Miss Libbie," said the old woman, pausing in front of her, "whah yo' rings?"

"Sold, Mammy. We sold even the jewels my father gave me as a girl."

"Whah's Miss Sallie?" persisted Mammy.

"Getting dinner."

"In de kitchen?"

"Yes."

"Miss Libbie," said Mammy, desperately, "I gwine bus' ef dis goes awn. Miss Libbie, please, 'm, let me 'n' Ephum stay wid you! Miss Ma'y Lou does huh bes', but she ain't my Miss Libbie, en it mighty near kills us to be separationed f'om you in yo' trouble!"

"Dear faithful souls," said Mrs. Loring, reaching out and taking their black hands in hers. "I knew why you came to-day, but, Mammy, it will hurt your pride more than it does mine to confess that I can't afford to keep you. I even had to let that miserable maid-of-all-work go. She was too wasteful. Mammy," — a pause, — "we couldn't even afford to feed two extra people all the time!"

At this Mammy and Ephum went down on their knees before Mrs. Loring, crying and laughing and supplicating her, interrupting each other, and both talking at once.

"Miss Libbie, honey, let us come in en hab dat white gal's room. Miss Libbie, since I got de indispepsy, I cyant eat nothin'. I jes' chaw a lill rice."

"En my rheumatiz needs starvin'. I alwuz hab et too much. 'Deed I has!"

"Me an' Ephum could do all de work, en 'sides dat de Loring fambly would be toge'rr agin!"

"Miss Libbie, you ain't got no right to shet me 'n' Mammy outen yo' trouble."

Mrs. Loring looked from one to the other of her old slaves with glistening eyes. They had been part of her wedding present from her father.

"I don't know," she said, hesitatingly.

In an instant they had taken advantage of her weakening.

"You might ez well gib in, Miss Libbie, cuz we'se come to stay, en our cloze is in de entry. Ephum, go git dat trunk!"

Mammy began to dust vigorously.

"Kin I speak to lill Miss?" she said, timidly.

"You had better wait until she has seen you and Ephum working about for a little while. She wouldn't recognise you if you spoke now. She only knows those of us whom she has seen since her illness."

Mammy brushed a tear from her eyes.

"Soon's I get dish yere room fixed, I'll go git dinnah. Reckon I'll s'prise Miss Sallie!"

Ephum appeared at the door loaded down with a tiny trunk, a flour bag tied around the mouth with a string, and a large basket in which something might be seen moving. The old man dexterously concealed the hidden fluttering as he passed through the room, and Mammy abetted his endeavour by attracting Mrs. Loring's attention to herself. Then Hope, roused from her abstraction, noticed them for the first time.

"Who are those people, and what are they doing here?" she said.

"Why, that is your dear old Mammy, who took care of you when you were a baby. Go and speak to her, Mammy!"

Hope held out her hand, as the old woman approached with her face quivering with feeling.

"I am very glad to meet you," said Hope, politely.

Mammy dropped Hope's hand, and throwing her apron over her head, she rocked herself back and forth, howling in negro grief.

"Oh," said Hope, startled, "why does she do that?"

"Because she is so grieved that you do not remember her."

"Remember her?" said Hope, in a bewildered voice. "I never saw her before!"

She turned to the window, and stood watching the flakes of snow. Mrs. Loring and Mammy looked at her a moment. Then the old black woman, who had pillowed her young mistress's head on her broad bosom, and cradled her in her baby griefs, once more opened her faithful arms, and Mrs. Loring accepted the familiar refuge and buried her face on Mammy's shoulder.

Suddenly Ephum's voice startled them. They looked up.

"Miss Libbie," said the old man, his face wrinkling with delighted grins at being back home once more, "is dish yere all de wider dis house is?"

"Yes, Ephum! Can you stand it?" said Mrs. Loring, with a smile.

"Yas'm! I'se got to stand it! 'Tain't wide enuff to set down — dat is, sideways." He laughed delightedly at his joke and went on. "'Twould be sorter dangerous foh me en Mammy to meet in dish yere bowling-alley wot dey calls a hall, cuz I'd be 'bleeged to smear myself into de wall-papah lake you mash a skeeter wid yo' thumb to let huh get pas'! Hit's lucky I didn' breng de dawg, Miss Libbie!"

"Why, Ephum?"

"Caze he's useter to waggin' his tail sideways, en I don' b'lieve I could teach him to wag it up en down!"

Mrs. Loring laughed outright at the old man's chuckles.

"Oh, Ephum!" she said, reproachfully. "I'm afraid this house doesn't suit you!"

"Laws, Miss Libbie," said Ephum, edging up to her confidentially, "you don't know how I enjoys gettin' back home so's I kin 'dulse myself in a good grumble. We alwuz felt lake we wuz comp'ny at Miss Ma'y Lou's, en sometimes me 'n' Mammy lake to died 'caze we never felt at liberty

to bus' out en say t'ings! Whah's Mist' Hamilton, Miss Libbie, chile?"

"He comes here every day."

"Is he still in lub wid lill Miss?"

"Yes, more than ever."

"En dat Mist' Fitzhugh," put in Mammy. "Is he still a-hangin' 'roun' Miss Sallie?"

"Yes, those two men were the only ones who were not frightened away from my girls by our poverty. Mrs. Fitzhugh was one of the first to forget us. Although she used to like Sallie, she is so opposed to her son's marriage to a penniless girl that she goes out of her way to insult me!"

"Huh!" cried Mammy, bridling, "does she t'ink we'se tryin' to cotch him?"

"It would seem so."

The old woman fairly trembled with outraged family pride.

"De no 'count usptart!" she cried. "De Lorings wuz slave-owners when huh gran'paw was swappin' furs! Whyn't you sass huh, Miss Libbie? Whyn't you tell huh Miss Sallie had to keep somebody in de room wid huh eve'y time a young man called to keep f'om bein' run away wid? Whyn't you tell huh we got a bull dawg a-puppose to keep beaux away f'om de house?"

"Ah, Mammy, to lose one's money in the North is to lose one's friends first of all. Not one of my

fine acquaintances has called upon me since we moved out here, and the reason they give is that 'old New Yorkers never call on any one beyond the fifties.' Now we are beyond one hundred. But the real reason is that New Yorkers, young or old, never call on any one who has the bad taste to lose his money."

Just here Sallie entered unexpectedly, and cried out, joyfully:

"Why, Mammy and Ephum! You here?"

"Yes, Miss Sallie, en we'se come to stay."

Sallie untied her apron, and sank into a chair with a little sigh.

"Oh, I'm so glad! I was worried about those biscuits!"

"Biskits!" cried Mammy.

She snatched Sallie's apron and left the room precipitately. Sallie sat rocking for a few moments, but always casting anxious glances at Hope, whose listlessness continually alarmed her. She feared it was growing on her. Finally, unable to bear it any longer, she went and knelt down by Hope's chair. She fondled her hand for a moment before she could control her voice.

"Hope, dear, would you like to take a walk in the snow?"

"No, thank you," said Hope, wearily.

Then Mammy appeared at the door with a box

of flowers. Sallie got up to receive it, and Hope looked down at her hand.

“Sallie left a tear on my hand. She thinks I don’t see her when she cries over me. Why do they all cry over me?”

She looked around in a puzzled manner to Sallie, who had taken the flowers from their box and was holding them up for Hope to see. Sallie’s face was pale with anxiety, for they were Black-Eyed Susans, and were tied with long orange and black ribbons. She knew that Cedric Hamilton had sent them purposely, and probably under Doctor Otto’s advice, for the two men were in constant communication over Hope’s case.

As Hope saw the once familiar colours, her expression gradually changed from one of listlessness to one of intelligence. A faint gleam came into her eyes. She smiled, and held out her hand. Mrs. Loring and Sallie and the two old negroes exchanged excited glances. Sallie put the flowers in Hope’s hand, and she fondled the ribbons with an anxious frown, as if trying to recall something. Then, often hesitating, she untied the ribbons and held them against her breast.

“Give her a pin, Sallie,” whispered Mrs. Loring.

Sallie held out a long black pin to her sister. Hope took it with a little sigh of relief, as if she had wanted it, but did not know how to ask for it.

She pinned the ribbons to her gown and rose to her feet, fingering the fluttering ends and smiling uncertainly. It seemed to the anxious watchers as if broken visions were passing over her clouded brain. She was undoubtedly trying to remember.

Suddenly her lips moved, and she said, whisperingly:

“Siss! Boom! Ah! Tiger!”

At this first sign of returning memory Mrs. Loring and Mammy burst into tears and hurried from the room. Hope looked disturbed. Then all signs of recollection passed from her face, and she resumed her old pastime of watching the flames. Sallie followed her and endeavoured to continue her interest, but Hope would only smile and glance occasionally at the orange and black ribbons. Finally Sallie placed the bowl of flowers on the mantel, and Hope transferred her attention from the fire to the flowers.

Old Ephum crept up to Sallie.

“Is she done cured, Miss Sallie?”

“No, Ephum. That was only a returning flash of memory. Still it was something, wasn’t it?”

“’Deed it was, Miss Sallie! Keep up yo’ heart, chile! She’s gwine come out all right. I feels it in my bones.” The old man started to go. “Oh, Miss Sallie,” he said, turning back, “yo’ Paw done said to tell you dat he saw Mist’ Fitzhugh to-day,

en he gwine call awn you dis evenin' so yo' Paw done axed him to dinnah!"

Sallie's face lighted up at the first part of this intelligence, but at the last, her face fell.

"To dinner!" she cried. "Oh, what shall I do! Here are Laflin and Cedric coming, and now Norman Fitzhugh. We won't have enough. Call Mammy, Ephum! I must ask her!"

As the old woman came in, Sallie said, in a tragic voice:

"Mammy, three extra people are coming to dinner, and we haven't even enough room in that tiny dining-room to seat so many, to say nothing of not having enough to go around. What shall we do?"

"Humph! Feed 'em, I reckon, Miss Sallie! Dat's mostly wot I does when folks comes to dinnah!"

"But on what and where?"

The old woman laid her finger on her lips and looked around.

"Leave eve'yt'ing to me, Miss Sallie! I'se managed worse p'edicaments dan dish yere'n. Hit's all gay young people wot's comin', so wot's de reason, ez long ez we cyan't do it in style, wid our havin' some fun out ob it, lake we use to in de gymnasium? Le's hab it en hyah! I'll mek Ephum breng in de dinnah-table, — Ephum, you go git dat

table right now ez long ez we wants to use it to-day! — en we'll use dish yere lill fellar foh de side-boa'd."

"That's all right, Mammy. But what shall we eat?"

The old woman began to laugh.

"Miss Sallie, snuff! Good! Don' you smell nottin'?"

"No, Mammy."

"Den you ain't got ez good a smeller as I is! 'Caze *I* smells somepin' mighty good. Didn't you hear no squawkin' 'bout half hour ago?"

"No, Mammy."

"Den yo' years ain't ve'y good. But Ephum did try to smother his dyin' squawks wid de bag."

"What do you mean, Mammy?"

"I means dat we done breng 'nuff provender wid us to las'! Miss Ma'y Lou done suggested dat we take somepin', en we mighty near cleaned huh out. When she goes to git a couple ob huh prize tuckeys, she won't find 'em, dat's all! En ez to chickens en a few pidgins to be smothered in onions de way yo' Paw loves 'em — humph, Miss Sallie! I got four kinds ob hot bread foh dinnah 'sides a heap ob odder t'ings. Dey would 'a' bin sent wid Miss Ma'y Lou's compliments ef she'd 'a' knowed we took 'em! Yas'm! We done breng in consider'ble foddah

wid our baggage. You know hit's a po' kind ob a camp-follerer wot don' know whah to forage!"

Sallie was so delighted to discover the full state of the larder that she closed her eyes to the manner of its arrival. Ephum brought the table and she helped him to spread the cloth. Hope followed the bowl of flowers with her eyes when Sallie took them for the centrepiece.

"Now fly around, slow-poke," said Mammy to Ephum, "en set de table foh Miss Sallie while I gets de dinnah, en don' you quit till eve'yt'ing is handy foh me to serve. Dat's de do' bell. I'll go, Miss Sallie!"

Sallie was a trifle disconcerted to discover Norman Fitzhugh in the doorway, with Mammy close at his heels.

The young man did not seem to see Hope, whose back was toward him, nor old Ephum, intent on following Mammy's instructions, but walked straight up to Sallie and took both of her hands. Mammy remained in the doorway, vainly trying to attract Ephum's attention. He did not see her violent beckoning.

"Sallie," said the young man, "I have come to tell you something — something that I hope you will want to hear!"

"Oh," said Sallie, glancing down and blushing.

"Won't you come and speak to Hope?" she stammered, to gain time.

"Oh, dat black fool!" muttered Mammy, completely exasperated. She coughed. Ephum looked up. She beckoned, but the old man held up a bunch of forks to show that he was not through. As Norman Fitzhugh and Sallie turned toward Hope, Mammy crept in like a burglar, and seizing Ephum's sleeve, pulled him violently toward the door.

"You black piece ob blame foolishness!" she whispered, savagely. "Whyn't you come when I motions you? Cyan't you see a love scene is goin' awn?"

"Quit pinchin' me," growled Ephum. "I'se fol-lorin' you!"

"Ob all de fools!" pursued Mammy. "Cyan't you gib de po' man a chancet to address Miss Sallie? You ox!"

"Whah's all dish yere Loring pride," said Ephum, in desperation, "'bout fightin' off husban's wid bull dawgs I heerd y'all spoutin' 'bout not half hour ago?"

"Dat's all right to talk about," said Mammy, pushing Ephum in front of her, "but no sane ooman gwine fly in de face ob Providence by actin' on it when a likely young man comes along wid a marryin' proposition in his eye!"

She considerably closed the door behind them, as she took him out.

“Sallie, don’t hold out against me any longer. I am my own master now, and can tell you how I have loved you and ask you to be my wife without fear of what any one may say. The estate has been divided, and I am in control of my property. No one has a right to dictate to me now — except you! Marry me, and accept the right to dictate to me always!”

“I would never dictate to you, Norman! But your mother!”

“My mother has nothing to do with the matter, if you love me. It is all jealousy on her part anyway. Mothers are nearly always jealous of their sons’ wives and are nearly always nasty to them. I don’t see why! She is fairly foolish over young Edwardes-Edwardes’s engagement to my sister.”

“Your mother used to like me,” said Sallie.

“And she will again, dear,” said Fitzhugh, eagerly. “Just marry me and see, Sallie. Don’t let trifles come between us now that the one great obstacle has been removed! I have loved you so long, and you can’t think how it breaks my heart to see you and your family in these surroundings. You would let me do something for all of you if I were your husband. My first thought when I heard that all contest of my father’s will had been

abandoned and that everything was to be divided now, was that I could be of use to your dear ones — I could take you for ever from all this; I could let Hope travel, and I could help undo the fearful wrong done your father. Sallie, he is the noblest man I ever knew. I happen to know that a woman went to him when she heard that Stuart was bent on his ruin, and placed evidence in his hands of Stuart's immorality by which he could have controlled Stuart's every act for all time. But your father scorned to use it. He stood up, and let that Pharisee Stuart murder him financially with a weapon of defence in his right hand. But he would not stoop to use it. Do you think I would not be proud to place my fortune at the command of so high-minded and honourable a man?"

"Oh, Norman," cried Sallie, her cheeks flushing with pride. The young man took both her hands in his and went on, wistfully.

"I know I am not worthy of you, Sallie. I am a good deal of a duffer if left to myself, but you could make of me anything that you liked."

The door was flung open just then, and Amy Whiting burst into the room, followed by Genevieve Lawrence and Gladys Cox. They paused in momentary confusion as Sallie and Fitzhugh started guiltily apart. Mammy's indignant face appeared in the doorway.

"I tried to stop 'em, Miss Sallie," she whispered.

"Do we interrupt? Oh, I hope not, because I've got something to tell you! I've got something to tell you!" cried Amy, whirling up to kiss Sallie and Hope.

"It's as good as a play," declared the other two in a breath.

"What is it?" asked Sallie, eagerly, for the faces of the girls were too excited to be withstood.

"Stand still a moment and tell them, Amy!" cried Gladys.

"Well, first of all, Stony and Rebecca are in town, and have been up to the house, and the fatted calf has been killed in honour of the prodigal's return! They gave them the glad hand!"

"That's not the beginning, Amy! You've told it hind side foremost!"

"Do you mean to say that Stony's father and mother welcomed Rebecca?" asked Sallie.

"No less! Fell on her neck. Kissed the face off her. Told her they had always wanted her for a daughter-in-law! The liars!"

"Amy!"

"But why? Why?" cried Sallie.

"Well, *I* did it!" said Amy, mischievously. "You see it got pretty bad at our house a little while ago. I was talking about racing one night at a dinner Aunt Mabel gave, and as we left the

room she collared me, and said I was never to mention a race-horse again while I was under her roof; that it was low and vulgar, and it encouraged Cuthbert to dare to say things to her and before her that he'd never done before. Wouldn't that kill you, when Cuth has a horse in the Suburban, and we've both bet every cent we could beg, borrow, or steal on him? "

" Well, go on, Amy! Don't stop to get mad over that! "

" And so," proceeded Amy, " something just rose up within me to rebel once for all, and get hold of my money and marry Fanshaw as soon as he graduates. I was tired of sneaking to meet him like a housemaid not allowed to have 'followers.' So what did I do but slip aboard the yacht just before Uncle Ian was to take a party of men down to Old Point for Sunday. Stony and Cuth and I have always been suspicious of those yachting parties, especially in winter. Stony always said that Uncle Ian owned the crew, body and soul, and as he never does anything except go yachting, we said he evidently wanted to keep the scandal in the family, so to speak."

Amy stopped here to circle around the room with her muff against her mouth.

" Well, what? " cried Sallie.

" Well, I won't tell what I found out. I've

promised not to. I can only say that I made terms with the enemy! I am in control of all my money now, — and as I am only twenty, that's a year before the will says, — and Cuth has had his allowance doubled, and Rebecca has been received with open arms, and Stony is to be given a position suitable to his station!"

"Oh, Amy! Amy!" cried Norman Fitzhugh.

"Oh, you don't know!" cried the girl, lifting her arms above her head. "Think of the relief! I need never tell another lie as long as I live!"

Sallie went over to her, and kissed her impulsively.

"Poor little girl!" she said.

Amy walked quickly to the window. Then she turned back.

"Sallie," she said, hesitatingly, "*please* put a few more plates on, and let us all stay to dinner! It would be so like old times!"

"Oh, do, Sallie!" cried the other girls.

Sallie bridled with pride at the knowledge that the full larder would admit of this wholesale hospitality.

"If you don't mind being crowded —" she began.

But before she could finish they fell upon her with distracted hugs, and flew from the room to remove their wraps.

Mammy came in, beaming with pride and bristling with importance.

"Miss Sallie, I reckon me en Ephum's coming sorter brung back all de ole set, for Marse Laflin jes' come in wid Mist' Hamilton en Miss Amy's beau, en he say Marse Jermyn stayed down-stairs to wait foh de bride en groom."

"What bride and groom?" asked Sallie.

"Why, Mist' Stony en Miss Rebecca! Now, Miss Sallie, hit's gittin' late, en we mus' ax 'em all to dinnah! 'Twon't do to let 'em go away hongry. Don' you fret. Ax 'em *all*, en I'll dish up de bes' dinnah y'all have tasted sence you druv me en Ephum away."

She went out, just as Hamilton entered. He came up to Sallie with a strained, eager look on his face, as if he hoped she would have some good news for him.

"Good afternoon, Miss Loring! How are you, Fitz? How is Hope?"

"Oh, she is a little better to-day! When your flowers came to-day, they were tied with long orange and black ribbons. Of her own accord she pinned them to her gown and whispered the Princeton cheer."

"Thank God!" cried the young man. "It has turned out as I hoped."

"Then you sent them purposely?"

"Yes, but I was such a coward that I feared to be here when the experiment was tried. Now I have courage for the rest of it."

He went to where Hope had sat a listless spectator to all this coming and going, which was so different from her usually quiet life that she might have noticed it.

"How do you feel to-day, Hope?" he said, taking her hand. She rose to her feet with the old-fashioned curtsy she had learned at Mme. St. Cloud's.

"Pretty well," she answered.

She looked up into his face with a polite but impersonal interest. Not a gleam of her former love for him showed in her beautiful wide eyes. He turned away with a groan of despair. Then he shook himself, and dug his hands deep into his pockets, saying, resolutely:

"I have Doctor Otto's authority to confirm an idea which I presented to him several weeks ago, and that is that a mental shock might perform the miracle of healing as well as a physical shock. The only question was as to the nature of it. To-day has given me a clue."

"A mental shock to Hope!" said Sallie, apprehensively. "Oh, be careful!"

"Don't discourage me, Sallie! I have brought Doctor Otto with me to see it tried, but he will remain out of sight!" implored Hamilton, calling

her by her Christian name for the first time. "It may be hard for you to believe, but it means more to me than it does to you. Your sister had almost promised to be my wife — she only asked for a little time — on the day she was hurt, so that if I could restore her mind to health — as it was before —"

He broke off abruptly, and made a quick turn around the room.

"But let me explain," he said, turning to her again. "You say that she has shown a distinct sign of recollection of the Princeton colours?"

"Yes, you can see for yourself. She still has the ribbons on, and keeps looking at them as she is doing now. She does not hear us. Her mind is busy trying to remember!"

"So much the better! Do you remember the day of her *début* tea?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Sallie, eagerly. "And the game!"

"Exactly. And the game! Well, now the most profound impression was made upon her mind by the disappointment and subsequent delight over our success in that game. Now suppose that Jermyn and Laflin and Nuckols in their football clothes should rush in here, as they did that day, what would Hope —"

"Oh, Cedric!" cried Sallie, her whole face spark-

ling with excitement. She hurried from the room without another word.

Both men looked after her in surprise. Sallie was usually so dignified. Then Fitzhugh said:

“Rather quick to catch an idea, isn’t she?”

“But did she get all of it?”

“All and more. I’ll wager that she has gone to tell the boys to dress, and to explain to all the others.”

“Who else is out there?”

“Miss Whiting and Miss Lawrence and Miss Cox and Stony Stuart and his wife. She at once remembered that they were all at the Lorings’ the day of Hope’s tea, and she fancied they would aid in bringing the familiar scene back to Hope’s mind.”

“So they will!” exclaimed Hamilton. “Things couldn’t be better. But you seem to know the workings of Sallie’s mind pretty well! I never would have thought of that. You must have studied her.”

“I hope she will give me that opportunity for life,” said Fitzhugh, seriously. Hamilton impulsively grasped his hand. Outside the door Mammy’s voice could be heard calling:

“Come awn to dinnah now, y’all! Don’ let de vittles git col’!”

Then they came in, all the young people divided between their interest in the bride and groom, and Sallie’s excited explanation of Hamilton’s plan for

Hope. Mrs. Loring was fearful, and had to leave the room and whisper to the doctor, and be reassured often. Mr. Loring appeared anxious to see if Hope would remember Rebecca, but she did not. She greeted her as a stranger, and tears even came into Stony's eyes when he saw it and realised the change in Hope.

Stony and Rebecca were delighted to be back among their friends again, and Amy mischievously repeated to the others the story of how graciously the bride and groom had been received.

They found places for themselves at the crowded table, with much laughter which had no real heart. and jests which were lifeless. Only Mammy and Ephum were unreservedly happy. They fetched chairs and served the smoking dishes with faces so full of satisfied joy at being at home once more that one could not help but sympathise.

Still all eyes were fixed on Hope, and all ears strained to hear the boys. Finally Hope's lack of appetite and listless manner so worked upon the girls' emotions that one by one they ceased even a pretence at eating, and leaned back listening and watching, and fairly sick with suspense.

Suddenly it came. The three boys, Jermyn, Laffin, and Nuckols, dressed in muddy football suits, burst into the room, shouting out with the whole uproarious strength of their lungs :

“ Here come the Elis !
We'll give them a surprise,
Open wide both their eyes,
Teach them football !
Princeton can never fail,
Yale can't twist Tiger's tail,
We are from Old Nassau ! ”

The blood prickled in the veins of all who heard, and shivers of feeling like shivers of cold shook their frames, but every eye was on Hope. As the familiar words struck her ear, the old-time sparkle came back to her eyes; the old-time colour fluttered in her cheeks, and when the boys to cap all let loose the Princeton yell, Hope sprang up, clapping her hands and crying:

“ Oh, I know! I know! Princeton won on Poe's kick! ”

Just as she had done on that day, she ran and flung herself into Jermyn's arms, while the yell tailed off into tremulous attempts to keep from breaking down utterly.

Hope turned back to the company with her old-time eagerness. She did not seem to notice their strained attitudes, their silence, or the quiet weeping of Sallie and her mother.

“ Oh, how hungry I am! You can't imagine! Come on, everybody! Don't let dinner get cold. Go on, boys, and tell about the game! I must have dreamed all about it, it seems so familiar. I can't

wait for you," she cried, seating herself, and beginning to eat ravenously. "I'm starving! Oh, how good these corn-pones taste. Mammy cooked these! You can't fool me on Mammy's cooking. I feel as if I hadn't eaten a thing for three months! Wasn't it grand about the game? Oh, I was so frightened for fear we wouldn't win. But," she sang:

"Princeton can never fail,
Yale can't twist Tiger's tail,
We are from Old Nassau!"

She waved her glass of water as she sang. As the others had not seated themselves, but had only drawn nearer, watching her with fascinated eyes, as if fearing to believe the truth, she said:

"Why, how funny you all act! What are you watching me for? Do you think I am crazy? Why — whose house are we in?"

As no one answered her, she leaned her head on her hands for a moment. Then as her memory slowly stole backward to her, she raised a mournful face, and said:

"Oh, I remember! It is all coming back to me. That day! I was hurt! I have been ill! And this," in a whisper, "is this — our house? Father, did you fail — after — after all?"

"Yes, daughter," said Mr. Loring, taking her hand in his. "But we are very happy in this little

apartment, for now that we have you back again — ” His voice faltered, and he broke off abruptly.

“ Yes, yes, I know,” interrupted Hope, “ but tell me how you could fail? ” Then turning to Hamilton, she said, before he could stop her :

“ You said Mr. Stuart wouldn’t lend him the money ! Father, I did my best for you ! I went to Mr. Stuart that very morning, and told him how you needed it — that you would be ruined if you didn’t get it ! I couldn’t do any more ! ”

Mr. Loring could not forbear a slight start as Hope innocently gave this information, but a gesture from Hamilton recalled him.

“ Poor little girl ! ” said Mr. Loring, stroking her hand.

“ But still,” said Hope, wrinkling her forehead, “ I can’t understand. Cedric told me to sell copper if I wanted to save you. Well, I sold copper ! ”

“ Sold copper ? ” cried her father.

“ Yes, sold copper ! ”

“ But how, Hope, darling ? Tell us about it. ”

“ I will, Daddy, dear. But first, before I begin to crow, tell me if I’ve anything to crow about ? Did I make any money ? Did copper go down ? ”

“ Go down ! ” said Mr. Loring, with a groan. “ It went to smash. The bottom dropped out of it. If you sold you must have made millions ! ”

“ If I have made millions they were made out of

your loss, so they are simply yours in my name. I won't touch a penny of it, nor tell you how I did it until you promise to take every dollar of it except my own little nest egg. For it's yours! I made it for you to keep you from losing everything."

"Oh," said Amy, to Fanshaw Nuckols, "how those Lorings stick together!"

The others thought Hope's brain was still troubled. They looked at each other in dismay, and Fitzhugh said:

"Sallie, dear, this is worse than the other!"

"No," said Sallie, with an excited little stamp of her foot, "Hope knows what she is about. You don't know her."

"Never mind, daughter," said Mr. Loring, taking her hand again. "I appreciate your kind motives, but you are not well enough to be so agitated. Come and sit down."

"Do you think I am still not in my right mind?" said Hope, slowly. She looked at them helplessly.

At a sign from Mr. Loring, Doctor Otto came in quietly, and seating himself, drew Hope down beside him.

"I remember you," said Hope. "You have been to see me — oh, so many times. I remember your face and the nurses you brought. I remember how ill I was, and how my head hurt, but, doctor, tell them I am well now! Tell them to let me explain!"

Doctor Otto held her hand in his, and talked to her in his quiet voice for a few moments.

"It is perfectly true," he said, at last. "Mrs. Loring, your daughter is as sane as I am!"

Hope fixed her wide beautiful eyes on the anxious faces around her. She rose and came forward.

"I can't do the story of that morning justice," she said, at last. Then, with a gesture of infinite confidence, she said:

"Tell them, Cedric!"

It was the first time she had apparently recognised their old relationship. He knew from that, without further proof, that she had taken up her old life again just where she had left it off, and the reaction of thankfulness and relief was so great as almost to unnerve him. But how to do as she asked? How to tell what he knew of Hope without betraying to Mr. Loring that he had known all the time where Hope's money was? Might not the whole Loring family become so incensed because of his non-committal attitude that they would make things vastly unpleasant? It was a path beset with pitfalls which Hope beckoned him to tread.

She was still looking at him expectantly. It was time to speak — to say something. Everybody was looking at him. Did Hope expect him to know that she was Amelia Love? He had only one guiding

clue. Her face would tell. He looked at her steadily.

"Hope, you were not in time," he said, slowly. He watched her narrowly. She smiled faintly. "No one made such an amount of money as you might have made if —"

"If I had followed your advice and sold copper," interrupted Hope.

"Hamilton told you to sell!" exclaimed Mr. Loring, involuntarily.

"Yes, after he found out that I had told Mr. Stuart that you needed money, he said Mr. Stuart was interested in copper, and on the other side. You hadn't told me that, Daddy! If you had, of course I wouldn't have gone to him for the world."

It was difficult for the men to repress a smile with Hope's innocent gray eyes upon them. Stony Stuart's face grew purple with shame.

"But Cedric knew it, and he said Mr. Stuart would, of course, protect himself! He had a right to do that, Stony! Don't shake your head and look so! Business is business, you know!"

There was a little involuntary movement among Hope's listeners to get closer to her, as if so utterly childish a creature needed their protection. Jermyn's eyes were rolling in his head.

"I always said cows would eat her, she's so

green!" he whispered to Laflin, who gave him a violent shove in the ribs for reply. But both boys had tears in their eyes — tears of love and sympathy for their Hope. Oh, there was no one like her to them! No one!

"Well?" said Hamilton, encouragingly.

"Well, and I couldn't have been too late, for I went from the bank straight across to Collins & Coker's, and gave my orders!"

The absolute confidence in Hamilton's judgment which this statement implied was the key-note to Hope's character. She trusted those she loved with the confidence of a baby who had never been deceived. But at the name of her brokers a rustle and a murmur arose from her listeners.

"Collins & Coker!" cried Mrs. Loring, speaking for the first time. "Why, they were the brokers of —" she stopped abruptly.

"Well?" said Hope, looking around anxiously. She grew pale.

All at once the words she had spoken to Cedric Hamilton, when she asked him to wait until she had atoned for something, flashed through his mind. This, then, was her atonement! To confess that she had been Amelia Love. He instinctively stepped forward to prevent her. But she seemed to divine his intention, and stopped him with a gesture.

"Hope," said her father, tenderly, "you must prepare yourself for a disappointment."

"Must I?" said Hope, smiling half sadly.

"For no one," continued her father, laying his hand on her hair, "made such an amount of money as you would have made—except that dancer, Amelia Love!"

Hope's smile grew anxious. She braided her fingers together nervously.

"Well," she said, piteously. "Will none of you help me to tell? Did none of you recognise me? Why, *I* was Amelia Love!"

Rebecca gave a little gasp when it came out. She reached for her husband's hand, as if she needed support. No one spoke. Hope's statement had bereft them of speech. She searched their faces eagerly until her eyes met Hamilton's. There they rested. He smiled at her, and with a little cry of relief and happiness, she ran to him, and he folded her in his arms before them all.

"My brave girl!" he whispered.

The others began to find their voices.

"Hope dancing on the stage!" murmured Sallie to Fitzhugh.

"She dances beautifully!" he said, promptly arraying himself on Hope's side so unmistakably that no one could misunderstand.

"Hope that bully little dancer at the Oriole!"

muttered Jermyn. "Well, as usual, she knocks me clean off my pins!"

"Funny we never thought of it, when that Tom-boy Dance was just like her!" said Laflin.

"Isn't — isn't Hope a d-daisy!" said Amy Whiting, who always stuttered when she was excited.

"She is just!" said Nuckols, regarding her with great respect.

"Never mind, little girl!" said her father, as Rebecca and Stony and the boys gathered around her.

"I know now how awful it was!" said Hope, looking at her father and mother tearfully. "But I didn't then! I didn't realise — I didn't think, because it was before —" she glanced into Hamilton's face.

"And the Leopolds always called for her —" began Mrs. Loring.

"Yes, indeed, mother. Comfort yourself all you can. I was never alone for one moment. Mammy knew."

"Mammy!" cried several voices at once.

The old black woman came forward slowly, her face ashen, her eyes rolling in fright, her tongue stuttering:

"Yas, Miss Libbie en Marse John. Y'all kin kill me ef you wanter, but I'se knowed it all de time — 'cept I didn't know 'bout dish yere copper

bizness! Ef I had, I'd 'a' tole double-quick! I never let de chile outen my sight. But I ain't a-trying to whitewash my sin. I knows I ought to be kilt, en I'se ready en willing to go!"

"Mammy, dear," said Mrs. Loring, "on the contrary, I love you more than ever for watching over her so faithfully. I know Hope; she would not let you tell us."

"Wouldn' let me!" said Mammy, indignantly. "She 'lowed she'd sell me back into slavery ef I tole!"

"Never mind, Mammy!" said Hope. "I take all the blame. It was every bit my fault."

"Hamilton," said Nuckols, digging his hands into his pockets, the better to emphasise his remark, "I believe you knew this all the time."

Hamilton looked deeply embarrassed. Now it was his turn to confess.

"I suspected it," he said. "You know I saw her dance!"

"So did the rest of us," said Laflin, "but we never suspected."

"Well, you see I — I love her!" said Hamilton.

At this Laflin and Jermyn grinned with such an air of pride that one would have thought Hamilton was announcing his engagement to *them*.

"And the rest of us didn't, I suppose," said Jermyn.

“And you were in father’s bank when you found out that copper was unavoidably going down,” said Stony Stuart, “and you advised her to sell, so as to take part of the stain off — so as to keep a little where it belonged!”

“There was nothing else to do,” said Hamilton, simply.

“And you begged father to let you send me through my last year at Princeton, and when he wouldn’t, you turned a better man than I was out of your office to make a place for me,” said Jermyn.

“And you were the one to cook up the scheme to bring back Hope’s memory,” said Nuckols, frowning fiercely to show that he was not moved, “and you kept this all secret for Hope’s sake!”

“It was Hope’s privilege to disclose it if she liked. The secret belonged to no one but Hope!” said Hamilton.

“You are right, Hamilton,” said Mr. Loring.

“By Jove!” cried Nuckols, blowing his nose with violence, “by the Lord Harry! By the great horn spoon!”

The boys closed around Hamilton. For a moment it looked as if they were going to hug him, but Laflin averted the danger by roaring out the first line of:

“It’s a way we have at Old Princeton!”

There were four Princeton men in the room besides Hamilton to join in, and in an instant the walls were shaking and the floors trembling.

As usual, Mrs. Loring and Sallie covered their ears.

THE END.

L. C. Page and Company's Announcement List of New fiction

The Flight of Georgiana

A ROMANCE OF THE DAYS OF THE YOUNG PRETENDER. By ROBERT NEILSON STEPHENS, author of "The Bright Face of Danger," "An Enemy to the King," "The Mystery of Murray Davenport," etc.

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By STEPHEN CONRAD, author of "The Second Mrs. Jim."

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This new book is in a sense a sequel to "The Second Mrs. Jim," since it gives further glimpses of that delightful step-mother and her philosophy. This time, however, she divides the field with "Mrs. Jimmie," who is quite as attractive in her different way. The book has more plot than the former volume, a little less philosophy perhaps, but just as much wholesome fun. In many ways it is a stronger book, and will therefore take an even firmer hold on the public.

The Story of Red Fox

Told by CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS, author of "The Watchers of the Trails," "The Kindred of the Wild," "Barbara Ladd," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative, with fifty illustrations and cover design by Charles Livingston Bull . . . \$2.00

Mr. Roberts's reputation as a scientifically accurate writer, whose literary skill transforms his animal stories into masterpieces, stands unrivalled in his particular field.

This is his first long animal story, and his romance of Red Fox, from babyhood to patriarchal old age, makes reading more fascinating than any work of fiction. In his hands Red Fox becomes a personality so strong that one entirely forgets he is an animal, and his haps and mishaps grip you as do those of a person.

Mr. Bull, as usual, fits his pictures to the text as hand to glove, and the ensemble becomes a book as near perfection as it is possible to attain.

Return

A STORY OF THE SEA ISLANDS IN 1739. By ALICE MACGOWAN and GRACE MACGOWAN COOKE, authors of "The Last Word," etc. With six illustrations by C. D. Williams. Library 12mo, cloth . . . \$1.50

A new romance, undoubtedly the best work yet done by Miss MacGowan and Mrs. Cooke. The heroine of "Return," Diana Chaters, is the belle of the Colonial city of Charles Town, S. C., in the early eighteenth century, and the hero is a young Virginian of the historical family of Marshall. The youth, beauty, and wealth of the fashionable world, which first form the environment of the romance, are pictured in sharp contrast to the rude and exciting life of the frontier settlements in the Georgia Colony, and the authors have missed no opportunities for telling characterizations. But "Return" is, above all, a *love-story*.

We quote the opinion of Prof. Charles G. D. Roberts, who has read the advance sheets: "It seems to me a story of quite unusual strength and interest, full of vitality and crowded with telling characters. I greatly like the authors' firm, bold handling of their subject."

Lady Penelope

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Mr. Roberts certainly has versatility, since this book has not a single point of similarity with either "Rachel Marr" or his well-known sea stories. Its setting is the English so-called "upper crust" of the present day. Lady Penelope is quite the most up-to-date young lady imaginable and equally charming. As might be expected from such a heroine, her *automobiling* plays an important part in the development of the plot. Lady Penelope has a large number of suitors, and her method of choosing her husband is original and provocative of delightful situations and mirthful incidents.

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When an author has an original theme on which to build his story, ability in construction of unusual situations, skill in novel characterization, and a good literary style, there can be no doubt but that his work is worth reading. "The Winged Helmet" is of this description.

The author gives in this novel a convincing picture of life in the early sixteenth century, and the reader will be delighted with its originality of treatment, freshness of plot, and unexpected climaxes.

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The Black Barque

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